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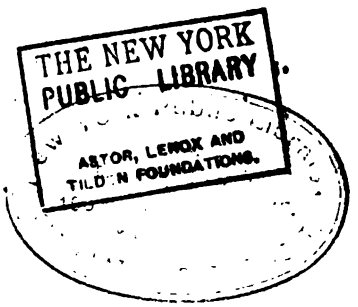
THE ROMANCES

OF

ALEXANDRE DUMAS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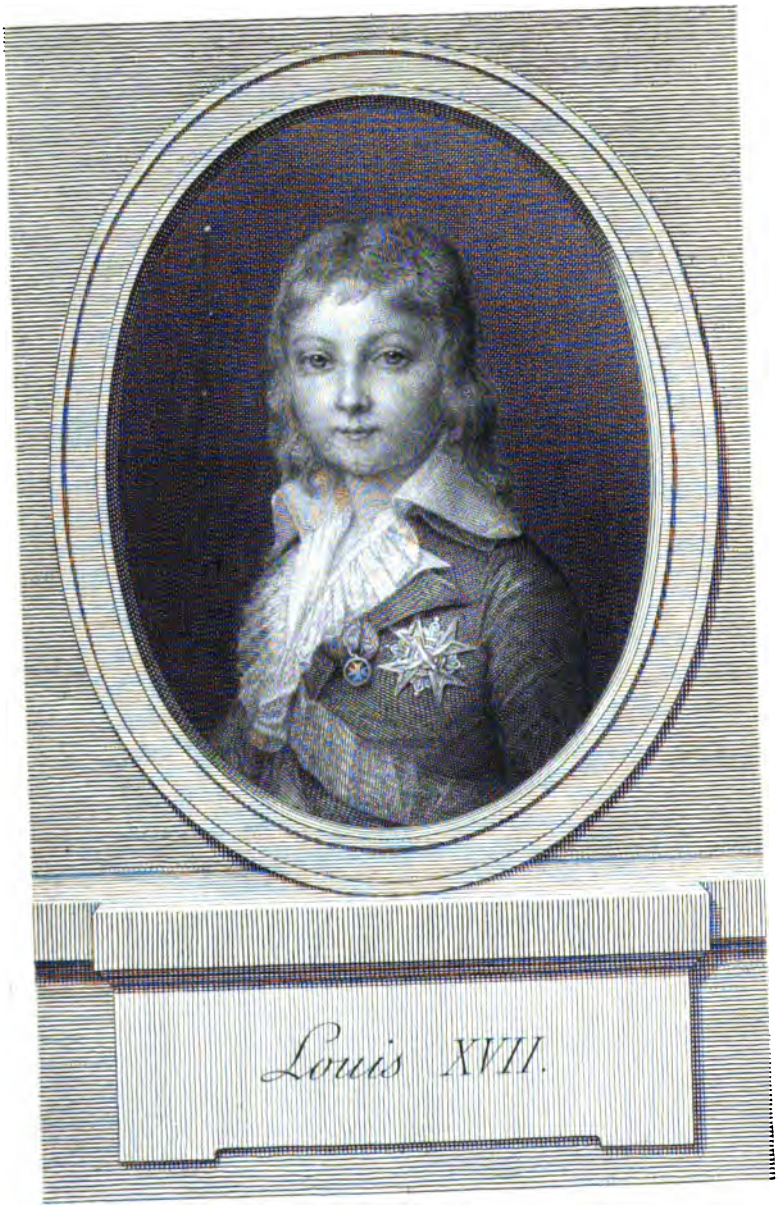
Louis XVII.

3/27/13

ATHENAEUM EDITION

THE ROMANCES OF Alexandre Dumas

VOLUME XX

THE CHEVALIER DE MAISON-ROUGE

TO WHICH IS ADDED

SYLVANDIRE

ILLUSTRATED

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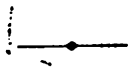
INTRODUCTORY NOTE.



The "Chevalier de Maison-Rouge," though it deals with events subsequent to those covered by the earlier stories of the Marie Antoinette cycle, was written at an earlier date. In it we are introduced to a new set of personages, and see no more of the characters whose fortunes furnish the fictitious as distinguished from the historical interest of the earlier stories.

The months which elapsed between the execution of the King and the appearance in the Place de la Révolution of the ill-fated Marie Antoinette were thickly strewn with tragedy, particularly after the final conflict between the Gironde and the Mountain, and the decisive victory of the latter, resulting in the undisputed supremacy of the band of men in whom we now see the personification of the Reign of Terror.

Those portions of the narrative which describe the life of the queen at the Temple, and subse-

quently in the Conciergerie, are founded strictly upon fact. Of the treatment accorded to the little Dauphin by Simon, who is given much prominence in the story, it need only be said that it falls far short of the truth as it is to be found in numberless memoirs and documents. There is nothing in all history more touching and heartrending than the fate of this innocent child, who was literally done to death by sheer brutality in less than two years; nor is there any one of the excesses committed by the extreme revolutionists which has done more to cause posterity to fail to realize the vast benefits which mankind owes to the Revolution, in the face of the unnamable horrors which were perpetrated in its name.

The noble answer of Marie Antoinette to the unnatural charges brought against her by Hébert (not Simon) was actually made at her trial.

There is no direct historical authority for the various attempts herein detailed to effect the escape of the Queen, although rumors of such were circulating unceasingly. The titular hero of the book is not an historical personage, nor are Maurice Lindey and Lorin; but the latter are faithful representatives of a by no means small class of sincere and devoted republicans who turned aside

with shrinking horror from the atrocities of the Terror.

The mutual heroism of Maurice and Lorin in the final catastrophe reminds us of the similar conduct of Gaston in the "Regent's Daughter" when he fails to reach Nantes with the reprieve until the head of one of his comrades had fallen. Nor can one avoid a thought of Sydney Carton laying down his life for Charles Darnay, in Charles Dickens's "Tale of Two Cities," wherein the horrors of the Terror are so vividly pictured.

One must go far to seek for a more touching and pathetic love-episode than that of Maurice and Geneviève, whose sinning, if sinning it was, was forced upon them by the cold and unscrupulous Dixmer in the pursuit of his one unchangeable idea.

On the 16th of October, 1793, the daughter of the Cæsars lost her life through the instrumentality of the machine which we saw Cagliostro exhibit to her in a glass of water at the Château de Taverney more than twenty years before. Then she was in the bloom of youth and beauty, a young queen coming to reign over a people who had just begun to realize their wrongs and their power. To-day she is a woman of thirty-eight, prema-

turely aged, but bearing about her still the noble dignity of her ancient race, and proving anew, as Charles I. had proved, and as her own husband had proved, that the near approach of death brings forth the noblest qualities in those of royal lineage.

We cannot better end this brief note than by quoting the characteristic but powerful apostrophe of Carlyle in his essay upon the "Diamond Necklace."

"Beautiful Highborn, thou wert so foully hurled low! For if thy being came to thee out of old Hapsburg dynasties, came it not also (like my own) out of Heaven? *Sunt lachrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt.* Oh, is there a man's heart that thinks without pity of those long months and years of slow-wasting ignominy: of thy birth, soft-cradled in imperial Schönbrunn, the winds of Heaven not to visit thy face too roughly, thy foot to light on softness, thy eye on splendor: and then of thy death, or hundred deaths, to which the guillotine and Fouquier-Tinville's judgment bar was but the merciful end? Look *there*, O man born of woman! The bloom of that fair face is wasted, the hair is gray with care: the brightness of those eyes is quenched, their lids hang drooping, the face is

stony pale, as of one living in death. Mean weeds, which her own hand has mended, attire the Queen of the World. The death-hurdle, where thou sittest pale, motionless, which only curses environ, has to stop; a people, drunk with vengeance, will drink it again in full draught, looking at thee there. Far as the eye reaches, a multitudinous sea of maniac heads: the air deaf with their triumph yell! The living-dead must shudder with yet one other pang: her startled blood yet again suffuses with the hue of agony that pale face which she hides with her hands. There is, then, no heart to say, God pity thee? O think not of these: think of HIM whom thou worshippest, the Crucified, — who also treading the wine-press *alone*, fronted sorrow still deeper: and triumphed over it, and made it holy: and built of it a Sanctuary of Sorrow for thee and all the wretched! Thy path of thorns is nigh ended. One long last look at the Tuileries, where thy step was once so light, — where thy children shall not dwell. The head is on the block: the axe rushes — Dumb lies the World: that wild-yelling World and all its madness is behind thee."

LIST OF CHARACTERS.

Period, 1793.

MARIE ANTOINETTE, THE DAUPHIN, MADAME ROYALE, THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH, } prisoners at the Temple.

CHEVALIER DE MAISON-ROUGE, M. DIXMER, GENEVIÈVE, his wife, SOPHIE TISON, } engaged in an attempt to rescue the Queen.

LIEUTENANT MAURICE LINDEY, a patriot, in love with Geneviève.
MAXIMILIEN-JEAN LORIN, his friend.
SANTERRE, Commandant of the Parisian National Guard.
SIMON, a cobbler.
PRESIDENT HARMAND, of the Revolutionary Tribunal.
FOUQUIER-TINVILLE, the public accuser.
M. GIRAUD, the city architect.
CHAUVEAU LAGARDE, counsel for the Queen.

JEAN PAUL MAROT, ROBESPIERRE, DANTON, CHÉNIER, HÉBERT, FABRE D'ÉGLANTINE, COLLOT D'HERBOIS, ROBERT LINDET, } Montagnards.

MM. VERGNIAUD, FERAUD, BRISSOT, LOUVET, PÉTION, VALAZÉ, LANJUINAIS, BARBAROUX, } Girondins.

MM. ROLAND, SERVIEN, CLAVIÈRES, LE BRUN, and MONGE, } of the French Ministry, August, 1793.

GENERALS DUMOURIEZ, MIACRINSKI, STEINGEL, NEUILLY, VALENCE, DAMPIERRE, and MIRANDA, } officers commanding the French armies on the frontiers.

HENRIOT, Commandant-General of the National Guard.

CITIZEN DEVAUX, of the National Guard.

CITIZENS TONLAN, LEPITRE, AGRICOLA, and MERCEVAULT, } of the Municipal Guard.

GRAMMONT, Adjutant-Major.

TISON, employed at the Temple Prison.

MADAME TISON, his wife.

ARTHÉMISE, ex-dancer at the opera.

ABBÉ GIRARD.

DAME JACINTHE, his servant.

TURGY, an old waiter of Louis XVI., attending the royal family at the Temple.

MUGUET, *femme-de-chambre* of Dixmer.

MADAME PLUMEAU, hostess of an alehouse near the Temple.

AGESILAUS, servant to Maurice Lindey.

ARISTIDE, concierge at Maurice's house.

GRACCHUS, a turnkey at the Conciergerie.

RICHARD, jailer at the Conciergerie.

MADAME RICHARD, his wife.

DUCHESSE, GILBERT, } Gendarmes at the Conciergerie.

SANSON, the executioner.

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LE

CHEVALIER DE MAISON-ROUGE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENROLLED VOLUNTEERS.

It was on the evening of the 10th of March, 1793; ten o'clock was striking from Notre Dame, and each stroke sounding, emitted a sad and monotonous vibration. Night had fallen on Paris, not boisterous and stormy, but cold, damp, and foggy. Paris itself at that time was not the Paris of our day, glittering at night with thousands of reflected lights, — the Paris of busy promenades, of lively chat, with its riotous suburbs, the scene of audacious quarrels, and daring crime, — but a fearful, timid, busy city, whose few and scattered inhabitants, even in crossing from one street to another, ran concealing themselves in the darkness of the alleys, and ensconcing themselves behind their portes-cochères, like wild beasts tracked by the hunters to their lair.

As we have previously said, it was the evening of the 10th of March, 1793. A few remarks upon the critical situation of the country, which had produced the changed aspect of the capital, before we commence stating the events the recital of which form the subject of this history.

France, by the death of Louis XVI., had become at variance with all Europe. To the three enemies she had first combated, — that is to say, Prussia, the Empire, and Piedmont, — were now joined England, Holland, and Spain. Sweden and Denmark alone preserved their old neutrality, occupied as they were besides in beholding Catharine II. devastating Poland.

The state of affairs was truly frightful. France, more respected as a physical power, but less esteemed as a moral one, since the massacres of September and the execution of the 21st of January, was literally blockaded, like a simple town, by the whole of Europe. England was on our coasts, Spain upon the Pyrenees, Piedmont and Austria on the Alps, Holland and Prussia to the north of the Pays-Bas, and with one accord from the Upper Rhine to the Scheldt two hundred and fifty thousand combatants marched against the Republic. Our generals were repulsed in every direction. Miaczinski had been obliged to abandon Aix-la-Chapelle, and draw back upon Liege; Steingel and Neuilly were driven back upon Limbourg; while Miranda, who besieged Maestricht, fell back upon Tongres. Valence and Dampierre, reduced to beat a retreat, did so with a loss of half their number. More than ten thousand deserters had already abandoned the army, and cleverly scattered themselves in the interior. At last the Convention, having no hope except in Dumouriez, despatched courier after courier, commanding him to quit the borders of the Biesboos (where he was preparing to embark for Holland), and return to take the command of the army of the Meuse.

Sensitive at heart, like an animate body, France felt at Paris — that is to say, at its core — each and every blow levelled at it by invasion, revolt, or treason, even from quarters the most distant. Each victory was

a riot of joy; every defeat an insurrection of terror. It is therefore easy to comprehend what tumult was produced by the news of these successive losses which we had just experienced.

On the preceding evening, the 9th of March, they had had at the Convention a sitting more stormy than usual; all the officers had received orders to join their regiments at the same time, and Danton, that audacious proposer of improbable things (but which nevertheless were accomplished), — Danton mounting the tribune, cried out, "Soldiers are wanting, say you? Offer Paris an opportunity of saving France. Demand from her thirty thousand men, send them to Dumouriez; and not only is France saved, but Belgium is secured, and Holland is conquered." This proposition had been received with shouts of enthusiasm, registers had been opened in all the sections, calling on them to assemble in the evening. Places of public amusement were closed to avoid all distraction, and the black flag was hoisted at the Hôtel de Ville, in token of distress. Before midnight, five and thirty thousand names were inscribed on the registers; only this evening, as it had before occurred in September, in every section, while inscribing their names, the enrolled Volunteers had demanded that before their departure the traitors might be punished.

The traitors were in fact the "contre-revolutionists," — the hidden conspirators who from within menaced the Revolution, thus menaced from without. But as may be easily understood, the word "traitor" extended to all those to whom the extreme parties who at this period tore France wished to apply it. The traitors were the weaker party; as the Girondins were the weakest, the Montagnards decided that the Girondins must be the traitors.

On the next day, which was the 10th of March, all the Montagnard deputies were present at the sitting. The Jacobins, armed, filled the tribunes, after having turned out the women; the mayor presented himself with the Council of the Commune, confirming the report of the Commissioners of the Convention respecting the devotedness of the citizens, but repeating the wish, unanimously expressed the preceding evening, for a Tribunal Extraordinary appointed to judge the traitors. The report of the Committee was instantly demanded with loud vociferations. The Committee met immediately, and in five minutes afterward Robert Lindet declared that a Tribunal would be formed, composed of nine judges (independent of all forms, and acquiring proof by every means), divided into two permanent sections, and prosecuting, by order of the Convention or directly, all those who were found guilty in any way of attempting to mislead the people.

This was a sweeping clause, and the Girondins, understanding it as their death-warrant, rose *en masse*. Death, cried they, rather than submit to the establishment of this Venetian inquisition.

The Montagnards, in reply to this apostrophe, demanded to put the matter to the vote in loud tones. "Yes," exclaimed Féraud, "let us vote to make known to the world the men who are willing to assassinate innocence under the mask of the law." They voted at length; and against all expectation the majority decided — (1) that they would have juries; (2) that these juries should be of equal numbers in the departments; (3) that they should be nominated by the Convention. At the moment when these three propositions were approved, loud cries were heard; but the Convention, accustomed to receive occasional visits from the populace, inquired their wishes, and were informed in reply that it was

merely a deputation of enrolled Volunteers, who, having dined at the Halle-au-Blé, demanded to be permitted to display their military tactics before the Convention.

The doors were opened immediately, and six hundred men, armed with swords, pistols, and pikes, apparently half-intoxicated, filed off amid shouts of applause, and loudly demanded the death of the traitors. "Yes," replied Collot d' Herbois, addressing them, "yes, my friends, we will save you — you and liberty — notwithstanding their intrigues." These words were followed by an angry glance toward the Girondins, which plainly intimated they were not yet beyond reach of danger. In short, the sitting of the Convention terminated, the Montagnards scattered themselves among other clubs, running first to the Cordeliers and then to the Jacobins, proposing to place the traitors beyond the reach of the law by cutting their throats that very night.

The wife of Louvet resided in the Rue Saint Honoré, near the Jacobins. She, hearing these vociferations, descended, entered the club, and heard this proposition; then quickly retraced her steps, and warned her husband of the impending danger. Louvet, hastily arming himself, ran from door to door to alarm his friends, but found them all absent; then fortunately ascertaining from one of the servants they had gone to Pétion's house, he followed them there. He found them quietly deliberating over a decree which ought to be presented on the morrow, and which by a chance majority they hoped to pass. He related what had occurred, communicated his fears, informed them of the plot devised against them by the Cordeliers and Jacobins, and concluded by urging them on their side to pursue some active and energetic measure.

Then Pétion rose, calm and self-possessed as usual,

walked to the window, opened it, looked at the sky, and then extended his hand, which he drew in covered with moisture. "It rains," said he; "there will be nothing to-night."

Through this half-opened window the last vibration of the clock was heard striking ten.

Such were the occurrences of the 10th of March and the evening preceding it, — occurrences which, in this gloomy obscurity and menacing silence, rendered the abodes destined to shelter the living like sepulchres peopled by the dead. In fact, long patrols of the National Guard, preceded by men marching with fixed bayonets, troops of citizens, armed at hazard, pushing against each other, gendarmes closely examining each doorway, and strictly scrutinizing every narrow alley, — these were the sole inhabitants who ventured to expose themselves in the streets. Every one instinctively understood that some unusual and terrible plot was in progress.

The cold and drizzling rain, which had tended so much to reassure Pétion, had considerably augmented the ill-humor and trouble of these inspectors, whose every meeting resembled preparation for combat, and who, after recognizing each other with looks of defiance, exchanged the word of command slowly and with a very bad grace. One would have said on seeing them separate and return to their several posts, that they mutually feared an attack from behind.

On the same evening, when Paris was a prey to one of these panics (so often renewed that they ought, in some measure, to have become habitual), — the evening on which the massacre of the lukewarm revolutionists was secretly debated, who after having voted (with reservation for the most part) the death of the king, recoiled

to-day before the death of the queen, a prisoner in the Temple, with her children and her sister-in-law, — a woman, enveloped in a mantle of lilac printed cotton with black spots, her head almost buried in her hood, glided along the houses in the Rue Saint Honoré, seeking concealment under a door-porch, or in the angle of a wall, every time a patrol appeared, remaining motionless as a statue and holding her breath till he had passed, and once more pursuing her anxious course with increased rapidity, till some danger of a similar nature again compelled her to seek refuge in silence and immobility.

She had already (thanks to the precautions she had taken) travelled over with impunity part of the Rue Saint Honoré, when at the corner of the Rue de Grenelle she suddenly encountered, not a body of patrol, but a small troop of our brave enrolled Volunteers, who, having dined at the Halle-au-Blé, found their patriotism considerably increased by the numerous toasts they had drunk to their future victories. The poor woman uttered a cry, and made a futile attempt to escape by the Rue du Coq.

"Ah, ah, Citizen!" cried the chief of the Volunteers (for already, with the need of command natural to man, these worthy patriots had elected their chief), "Ah, where are you going?"

The fugitive made no reply, but continued her rapid movement.

"What sport!" said the chief; "it is a man disguised, an aristocrat who thinks to save himself."

The sound of two or three guns escaping from hands rather too unsteady to be depended upon, announced to the poor woman that her haste was a fatal mistake.

"No, no," cried she, stopping short, and retracing her steps; "no, Citizen; you are mistaken. I am not a man."

"Then advance at command," said the chief, "and reply to my questions. Where are you hastening to, charming belle of the night?"

"But, Citizen, I am not going anywhere. I am returning."

"Oh! returning, are you?"

"Yes."

"It is rather a late return for a respectable woman, Citizeness?"

"I am returning from visiting a sick relative."

"Poor little kitten!" said the chief, making a motion with his hand, before which the horrified woman quickly recoiled, "where is your passport?"

"My passport! What is that, Citizen? What do you mean?"

"Have you not read the decree of the Commune?"

"No."

"You have heard it proclaimed, then?"

"Alas, no! What, then, said this decree, in the name of God?"

"In the first place, we no longer say 'God'; we only speak of the 'Supreme Being' now."

"Pardon my error. It is an old custom."

"Bad habit — the habit of the aristocracy."

"I will endeavor to correct myself, Citizen; but you said —"

"I said that the decree of the Commune prohibited any one to go out, after ten at night, without a civic pass. Now, have you this civic pass?"

"Alas! no."

"You have forgotten it at your relative's?"

"I was ignorant of the necessity of taking it with me on going out."

"Then come with us to the first post; there you can

explain all prettily to the captain; and if he feels perfectly satisfied with your explanation, he will depute two men to conduct you in safety to your abode, else you will be detained for further information. File left! forward! quick march!"

From the cry of terror which escaped the poor prisoner, the chief of the enrolled Volunteers understood how much the unfortunate woman dreaded this interview.

"Oh, oh!" said he, "I am quite certain we hold distinguished game. Forward, forward — to the route, my little *ci-devant*."

And the chief seizing the arm of the captive, placed it within his own, and dragged her, notwithstanding her cries and tears, toward the post of the Palais Egalité.

They were already at the top of the barrier of Sergents, when suddenly a tall young man, closely wrapped in a mantle, turned the corner of the Rue des Petits-Champs at the very moment when the prisoner was endeavoring, by renewing her supplications, to regain her liberty. But without listening the chief dragged her brutally forward. The woman uttered a cry of grief mingled with terror. The young man saw the struggle, heard the cry, and bounding from the opposite side of the street, found himself facing the little troop.

"What is all this? What are you doing to this woman?" demanded he of the person who appeared to be the chief.

"Before you question me, you had better attend to your own business."

"Who is this woman; and what do you want with her?" repeated the young man, in a still more imperative tone than at first.

"But who are you, that you interrogate us?"

The young man opened his cloak, when an epaulet was visible, glistening on his military costume.

"I am an officer," said he, "as you can see."

"Officer! In what?"

"In the Civic Guard."

"Well, what of that?" replied one of the troop. "What do we know here of the officers of the Civic Guard?"

"What is that he says?" asked another man, in a drawling and ironical tone peculiar to a man of the people, or rather of the Parisian populace, when beginning to be angry.

"He says," replied the young man, "that if the epaulet cannot command respect for the officer, the sword shall command respect for the epaulet."

At the same time, making a retrograde movement, the unknown defender of the young woman had disengaged his arm from the folds of his mantle, and drawn from beneath it, sparkling by the glimmer of a lamp, a large infantry sabre. Then with a rapid movement which displayed his familiarity with similar scenes of violence, he seized the chief of the Volunteers by the collar of his jacket, and placing the point of the sabre to his throat, "Now," said he, "let us speak like friends."

"But, Citizen," said the chief, endeavoring to free himself.

"I warn you, that at the slightest movement made, either by you or any of your men, I pass my sabre through your body."

During this time two men belonging to the troop retained their hold of the woman.

"You have asked who I am," continued the young man, "which you had no right to do, since you do not command a regular patrol. However, I will inform you. My

name is Maurice Lindey; I commanded a body of artillery-men on the 10th of August, am now lieutenant in the National Guards, and secretary to the section of Brothers and Friends. Is that sufficient?"

"Well, Citizen Lieutenant," replied the chief, still menaced with the blade, the point of which he felt pressing more and more, "this is quite another thing. If you are really what you say, — that is, a good patriot —"

"There, I knew we should soon understand each other," said the officer. "Now, in your turn, answer me: why did this woman call out, and what are you doing with her?"

"We are taking her to the guard-house."

"And why are you taking her there?"

"Because she has no civic pass, and the last decree of the Commune ordered the arrest of any and every individual appearing in the streets of Paris without one, after ten o'clock at night. Do you forget the country is in danger, and that the black flag floats over the Hôtel de Ville?"

"The black flag floats over the Hôtel de Ville, and the country is in danger, because two hundred thousand slaves march against France," replied the officer, "and not because a woman runs through the streets of Paris after ten o'clock at night. But never mind, citizens. There is a decree of the Commune, it is true, and you only did your duty; and if you had answered me at once, our explanation might have been a much shorter and probably a less stormy one. It is well to be a patriot, but equally so to be polite; and the first officer whom the citizens ought to respect is he, it seems to me, whom they themselves appointed. In the mean time, take the woman with you, if you please. You are at liberty to depart."

"Oh! Citizen," cried the woman, who had listened to

the whole of this debate with the most intense anxiety, — "Oh! Citizen," she cried, seizing the arm of Maurice, "do not abandon me to the mercy of these rude and half-drunken men."

"Well, then," said Maurice, "take my arm, and I will conduct you with them as far as the Poste."

"To the Poste!" exclaimed the terrified woman, "and why to the Poste, when I have injured no one?"

"You are taken to the Poste," replied Maurice, "not because you have done any one wrong, or because you are considered capable of so doing, but on account of the decree issued by the Commune, forbidding any one to go out without a pass, and you have none."

"But, Monsieur, I was ignorant of the law."

"Citizen, you will find at the Poste brave and honorable men, who will fully appreciate your reasons, and from whom you have nothing to fear."

"Monsieur," said the young woman, pressing Maurice's arm, "it is no longer insult that I fear, it is death; if they conduct me to the Poste, I am lost."

CHAPTER II.

THE UNKNOWN.

THERE was in this voice an accent of so much terror, mingled with superiority, that Maurice was startled. Like a stroke of electricity, this vibrating voice had touched his heart. He turned toward the enrolled Volunteers, who were talking among themselves. Humiliated at having been held in check by a single individual, they were now consulting together with the visible intention of regaining their lost ground. They were eight against one; three were armed with guns, the remainder with pistols and pikes. Maurice wore only his sabre. The contest could not be an equal one. Even the woman comprehended this, as she held down her head and uttered a deep sigh.

As to Maurice, with his brows knit, his lip disdainfully curled, and his sabre drawn from its scabbard, he stood irresolute, fluctuating between the sentiments of a man and a citizen, — the one urging him to protect the woman, the other counselling him to give her up. All at once, at the corner of the Rue des Bons-Enfans, he saw the reflection of several muskets, and heard also the measured tread of a patrol, who, perceiving a crowd, halted within a few paces of the group, and through the corporal demanded, "Who goes there?"

"A friend," said Maurice. "A friend! Advance, Lorin!"

He to whom this order was addressed, placed himself at the head of his eight men, and quickly approached.

"Is it you, Maurice?" said the corporal. "Ah, libertine! what are you doing in the streets at this hour?"

"You see, I come from the section of Brothers and Friends."

"Yes; to visit that of sisters and friends. We know all about that.

"Ah, listen, ma belle,
When the dusk midnight hour
The church-bell shall toll,
I will haste to thy bower;
To thy side I will steal,
Spite of bolts and of bars,
And my love will reveal
'Neath the light of the stars.

Is it not so, eh?"

"No, friend, you are mistaken. I was on my way home when I discovered this citizen struggling in the hands of these citizen Volunteers, and ran up to inquire why they wished to detain her."

"It is just like you," said Lorin.

"For all the world knows that the fair sex so dear
Has ever a friend in the French cavalier."

Then turning toward the Volunteers, "Why did you stop this woman?" inquired the poetical corporal.

"I have already told the lieutenant," replied the chief of the little troop, "because she had no pass."

"Bah! bah!" said Lorin, "a great crime, certainly."

"Are you then ignorant of the decree of the Commune?" demanded the chief of the Volunteers.

"Yes; but there is another clause which annuls that."

"Which?"

"Listen: —

"On Pindus and Parnassus, it is decreed by Love,
That Beauty's witching face,
That Youth and fairy Grace,
Without a pass, by day or night, may through the city rove.

What do you say to this decree, Citizen? it is gallant, it seems to me."

"Yes; but it does not appear to me peremptory. In the first place it has not appeared in the 'Moniteur;' then we are neither upon Pindus nor Parnassus; it is not yet day; and lastly, the citizeness is perhaps neither graceful, young, nor fair."

"I wager the contrary," said Lorin. "Prove that I am in the right, Citizeness; remove your hood that all may judge if you come under the conditions of the decree."

"Monsieur," said the young woman, pressing closer to Maurice, "having saved me from your enemies, protect me now from your friends, I beseech you."

"You see," said the chief, "how she hides herself. In my opinion she is a spy of the aristocrats, — some street-walker."

"Oh, Monsieur!" said the young woman, stepping before Maurice, and discovering a face radiant with youth, rank, and beauty, visible by the light of the lamp, "do I look like what they have termed me?"

Maurice was dazzled. He had never even dreamed of beauty equal to that he had caught sight of for a moment, and only for a moment, since the unknown had again concealed her face in the hood as rapidly as she had unveiled it. "Lorin," said Maurice, in a whisper, "claim the prisoner, that you may conduct her to your post; you have a right to do so as chief of patrol."

"Very good," said the young corporal, "I understand with half a word."

Then, addressing himself to the unknown, "Let us go, ma belle," continued he; "since you will not afford us the proof that you are within the conditions of the decree, you must follow us."

"Why follow you?" said the chief of the enrolled Volunteers.

"Certainly. We shall conduct the citizeness to the post of the Hôtel de Ville, where we are on guard, and there she will be examined."

"Not so, not so," said the chief of the first troop; "she belongs to us, and we will keep her."

"Citizens, citizens," said Lorin, "you will make me angry!"

"Angry, or not angry, *morbleu*, it is equally the same to us. We are true soldiers of the Republic, and while you patrol the streets, we go to shed our blood on the frontier."

"Take care you do not shed it by the way, citizens, which is very likely to occur, if you are not rather more polite than you are at present."

"Politeness is a virtue appertaining to the aristocracy, and we belong to the lower orders," replied the chief.

"Do not speak of these things before Madame," said Lorin, "perhaps she is an Englishwoman. Do not be angry at the supposition, my beautiful bird of the night," added he, gallantly, turning toward the unknown. "Doubtless you are conversant with the poets, and one of them tells us 'that England is a swan's nest situated in the midst of a large pond.'"

"Ah! you betray yourself," said the chief of the enrolled; "you avow yourself a creature of Pitt, in the pay of England. A—"

"Silence," said Lorin; "you do not understand poetry; therefore I must speak to you in prose. We are National

Guards, affable and patient fellows enough, but still children of Paris, — that is to say, if we are provoked we strike rather hard."

"Madame," said Maurice, "from what you have now witnessed you can easily imagine what will soon follow. In five minutes ten or twelve men will be cutting one another's throats for you. Is the cause your defenders have embraced worthy of the blood they are about to shed?"

"Monsieur," replied the unknown, clasping her hands, "I can only assure you that if you permit me to be arrested, the result to myself will be dreadful, but to others fatal; and that rather than you should abandon me, I would beseech you to pierce me through the heart with the weapon you hold in your hand, and cast my corpse into the Seine."

"Madame," replied Maurice, "I will take all the responsibility upon myself;" and letting drop the hand of the lovely *incognita* which he held in his own, —

"Citizens," said he, addressing himself to the National Guard, "as an officer, as a patriot, and a Frenchman, I command you to protect this woman. And, Lorin, if any of these *canaille* say one word, put them to the bayonet."

"Carry arms!" cried Lorin.

"God of mercy!" cried the unknown, enveloping her head still closer in her hood, and supporting herself against a post, "O God! protect him!"

The Volunteers directly placed themselves on the defensive, and one among them fired his pistol, the ball passing through the hat of Maurice.

"Charge bayonets!" cried Lorin.

Then, in the darkness of night, a scene of struggling and confusion ensued, during which one or two shots were heard, followed by cries, imprecations, and blasphemies; but no one appeared, because, as we have said,

a massacre was secretly debated, and it was believed that it had commenced. Two or three windows only were opened for an instant, but were immediately closed. Less in number, and worse armed, the enrolled Volunteers were in an instant defeated. Two were badly wounded and four others pinned against the wall, each with a bayonet at his breast.

"There," said Lorin, "I hope now you will remain as quiet as lambs. As for you, Citizen Maurice, I order you to conduct this woman to the post of the Hôtel de Ville. You understand you are answerable for her."

"Yes," said Maurice. Then, in a low tone, "And the password?" added he.

"The devil!" said Lorin, rubbing his ear, "the password; it is —"

"Do not fear I shall make a bad use of it."

"Faith," said Lorin; "make what use you like of it, that is your concern."

"Tell me then," said Maurice.

"I will tell you all in good time, but let us first dispose of these tipsy fellows. Then, before we part, I shall not be sorry to give you a few words of advice."

"Well, I will wait."

Lorin then turned to his National Guards, who still kept the enrolled Volunteers in subjection.

"Now," said he, to the latter, "have you had sufficient?"

"Yes, dog of a Girondin," replied the chief.

"You deceive yourself, my friend," said Lorin, coolly; "we are better sans-culottes than yourselves, seeing that we belong to the club of Thermopyles, of whose patriotism no one, I hope, entertains a doubt. Let these citizens go," continued Lorin, "they resist no longer."

"It is not the less true that if this woman is an object of suspicion —"

"If she was a suspicious character she would have made her escape during this skirmish, and not, as you see she has done, waited till it had terminated."

"Hum!" said one of the Volunteers, "What the Citizen Thermopyle observes is quite true."

"Besides, we shall know, since my friend is going to conduct her to the Poste, while we go and drink to the health of the nation."

"Are we going to drink?" said the chief.

"Certainly, I am very thirsty, and I know a pretty little cabaret at the corner of the Rue Thomas du Louvre."

"Why did you not say so at once, Citizen? We are sorry to have doubted your patriotism; and to prove it, let us, in the name of the nation and the law, embrace each other as friends."

"Let us embrace," said Lorin.

And the enrolled Volunteers and the National Guards embraced with warm enthusiasm. At this period the French people were as anxious to embrace as to behead one another.

"Let us now go," cried the two united troops, "to the corner of the Rue Thomas du Louvre."

"And we," said one of the wounded, in a plaintive voice, "do you intend to abandon us here?"

"Ah, well! yes," said Lorin, "abandon the heroes who have fallen bravely fighting for their country against patriots — it is true by mistake, but still true for all that; we will send you some wheelbarrows. Meanwhile you can sing the Marseillaise, it will divert you."

Then approaching Maurice, who was waiting for him, with the unknown, at the corner of the Rue du Coq, while the National Guards and enrolled Volunteers arm-in-arm retraced their steps toward the square of the Palais-Egalité, —

"Maurice," said he, "I promised you some counsel, and it is this. Be persuaded to accompany us, rather than compromise yourself by protecting this young woman, who, it is true, is very charming, and on that account not the less to be suspected; for charming women who run about the streets of Paris at midnight —"

"Sir," said the young woman, "judge me not from appearances, I implore you."

"In the first place, you say *sir*, and that is a great fault. Do you understand, Citizeness, what I say?"

"Of course I do, Citizen; but allow your friend to accomplish his kind action."

"In what way?"

"By conducting me home, and protecting me on my road."

"Maurice, Maurice," said Lorin, "consider well what you are about; you will compromise yourself terribly."

"I know it well," said the young man; "but what would you have me do? If I leave the poor woman, she will be stopped at every step by the patrols."

"Oh, yes, yes! while with you, sir, — while with you, Citizen, I meant to say, I shall be safe."

"You hear," said Lorin, "safe! She then runs great danger?"

"My dear Lorin," said Maurice, "let us be just. She must be either a good compatriot or an aristocrat. If she is an aristocrat, we have erred in protecting her; if she is a good patriot, it is our duty to preserve her."

"Your pardon, friend; I am sorry for Aristotle, but your logic is at fault. See what he says: —

"Iris my reason steals away,
And yet she tells me to be wise;
Oh, lady! I can only say,
Then turn away those glorious eyes."

"Lorin," said Maurice, "a truce to Dorat, to Parny, and to Gentil-Bernard, I pray you. Speak seriously; will you, or will you not, give me the password?"

"That is to say, Maurice, you place me in this dilemma, — I must either sacrifice my duty to my friend, or my friend to my duty; but I fear, Maurice, my duty will fall the sacrifice."

"Decide, then, for one or the other, my friend; but in the name of Heaven, decide quickly."

"You will not abuse it?"

"I promise you."

"That is not sufficient; swear!"

"Upon what?"

"Swear upon the altar of your country."

Lorin pulled off his hat, presenting to Maurice the side with the cockade, and Maurice, finding the affair very simple, took, without smiling, the oath required upon this improvised altar.

"Now, then," said Lorin, "this is the password — France and Lutèce; perhaps you would say, France and Lucrèce; but let that pass, it is Roman all the same."

"Fair Citizeness," said Maurice, "I am now at your service. Thanks, Lorin."

"*Bon voyage*," cried Lorin, replacing on his head "the altar of his country," and faithful to his Anacreontic taste, departed singing: —

"Eleonora, Eleonora!
Now I 've taught you how to love,
Tell your passionate adorer
Does the lesson weary prove?"

CHAPTER III.

THE RUE DES FOSSES SAINT VICTOR.

MAURICE finding himself alone with the young woman felt for the moment deeply embarrassed. The fear of being duped, attracted by her marvellous beauty, troubled his conscience as a pure and exalted Republican, and caused him to hesitate when about to offer her the support of his arm.

"Where are you going, Citizeness?" said he.

"Alas, sir, a long way from here," replied she.

"But how far?"

"By the side of the Jardin des Plantes."

"It is some distance; let us proceed on our way."

"Ah, sir!" said the unknown; "I plainly perceive I am a burden to you; but indeed it is no ordinary danger that I incur. Were it not so, believe me, I should not abuse your generosity."

"But, Madame," said Maurice, who during this *tête-à-tête* had totally forgotten the language imposed by the Republican vocabulary, and returned to the language of a gentleman, "how is it, in all conscience, that at this hour you are found in the streets of Paris, where, with the exception of ourselves, you do not see a solitary individual?"

"I have told you, sir; I have been paying a visit to the Faubourg du Roule. Leaving home at mid-day, and knowing nothing of what had taken place, I returned in equal ignorance, all my time having been spent in deep retirement."

"Yes," murmured Maurice, "in some retired house, the resort of the aristocrats. Confess, Citizeness, that, while outwardly demanding my protection, you laugh in your sleeve at my egregious folly."

"Why should I act thus?"

"You are aware that a Republican is your guide. Well, this Republican betrays his cause, that is all."

"But, Citizen," quickly rejoined the unknown, "I, as well as you, love the Republic; you labor under a mistake concerning me."

"Then, Citizeness, if you are a good patriot, you can have no cause for concealment. Where do you come from?"

"Monsieur, excuse me."

There was in this "monsieur" so much sweetness and modesty of expression, that Maurice believed it to be founded on some sentiment concealed.

"Surely," said he, "this woman is returning from some assignation."

At this moment, without knowing why, he felt deeply oppressed at this thought, and for a short time he remained silent.

When these two nocturnal promenaders had reached the Rue de la Verrerie, after having encountered three or four patrols, who, thanks to the password, allowed them free passage, the last watchman appeared somewhat suspicious. Maurice found it necessary to give his name and residence.

"That is all that is required from you," said the officer; "but the citizeness, who is she?"

"The sister of my wife."

The officer permitted them to pass.

"You are then married, sir?" murmured the unknown.

"No, Madame; why do you think so?"

"Then," said she, laughing, "you had better have said I was your wife."

"Madame," said Maurice, "the name of wife is rather too sacred to be lightly bestowed. I have not the honor of your acquaintance."

The unknown in her turn felt an oppression of the heart, and remained silent and confused. At this moment they crossed the Bridge Marie. The young woman quickened her pace as they approached the end of their journey. They crossed the Bridge de la Tournelle.

"We are now, I believe, in your quarter," said Maurice, planting his foot on the Quai Saint Bernard.

"Yes, Citizen," replied the young woman; "but it is precisely here I most require your kind assistance."

"Really, Madame," said Maurice, "you forbid me to be indiscreet, yet do all in your power to excite my curiosity. This is not generous. Grant me your confidence. I have merited it, I think. Will you not do me the honor to tell me to whom I speak?"

"You speak, sir," said the unknown, smiling, "to a woman whom you have saved from the greatest danger she has ever encountered; to one who owes you a debt of everlasting gratitude."

"I do not require so much, Madame; be less grateful, and pending the second we shall yet be together, tell me your name."

"Impossible!"

"You would have told it nevertheless to the first sectionary, if you had been taken to the station."

"No, never!" exclaimed the unknown.

"But in that case you would have gone to prison."

"I had considered all that."

"And prison at this moment —"

"Means the scaffold; I know all that."

"And you would have preferred the scaffold?"

"To treason, — to discover my name would be treason."

"I said truly, you compel me to act a singular part for a Republican!"

"You act the part of a truly generous man. You find a poor woman subjected to insult; you do not contemn her because she might be 'one of the people,' but that she may be exempted from fresh annoyances, to save her from shipwreck, you reconduct her to the miserable quarter she inhabits."

"As far as appearances go, you state the matter correctly, and I might have credited you, had I never either seen you or heard you speak; but your beauty and mode of expression stamp you as a woman of distinction, and it is just this distinction, in opposition to your costume and this miserable quarter, which proves to me that your absence from home at this unseasonable hour conceals some mystery. You are silent. We will speak no more. Are we far from your house, Madame?"

At this moment they entered the Rue des Fosses Saint Victor.

"You see that small dark building," said the unknown to Maurice, pointing toward a house situated beyond the walls of the Jardin des Plantes. "When we reach there you must quit me."

"Very well, Madame, issue your orders; I am here only to obey."

"You are angry."

"I angry? — not the least in the world; besides, what does it matter to you?"

"It matters much, since I have yet a favor to ask of you."

"What is that?"

"A kind and frank adieu, — the farewell of a friend."

"The farewell of a friend! Oh, Madame, you do me too great an honor. A singular friend, not to know the name of his friend, who even conceals from him where she resides, no doubt from the fear of being too much troubled with his company."

The young woman hung down her head, but did not reply to this sarcasm.

"As to the rest, Madame," continued Maurice, "if I have discovered a secret, I did so involuntarily, and without any effort on my part to do so."

"I have now reached my destination, sir," said the unknown.

They were opposite the old Rue Saint Jacques, lined with tall dark-looking houses, intersected by obscure narrow alleys, leading to streets occupied by manufactories and tanyards, as within two steps ran the little river De Bièvre.

"Here!" said Maurice, "is it here that you live?"

"Yes."

"Impossible!"

"It is so, nevertheless. And now, adieu! my brave chevalier, my generous protector, adieu!"

"Adieu! Madame," said Maurice, with slight irony of tone, "but first again assure me you run no further risk of danger."

"None whatever."

"In that case I will leave you."

Maurice then bowed coldly and retired a few paces. The unknown remained standing for an instant in the same place.

"I do not like to take my leave of you thus," said she. "Come, Monsieur Maurice, your hand."

Maurice approached, and held out his hand, and then felt the young woman slip a ring on his finger.

"Oh, Citizen! what have you done? Do you not perceive that you have lost one of your rings?"

"Sir, you wrong me much."

"The crime of ingratitude is wanting in me; is it not so, Madame?"

"Come, I beseech you, sir — my friend, do not leave me thus. What do you wish to know? What do you ask?"

"Payment — is it not so?" said the young man, bitterly.

"No," said the unknown, with a bewitching expression; "but forgive me the secrecy I am obliged to preserve toward you."

Maurice, seeing in the obscurity those beautiful eyes wet with tears, feeling the pressure of that soft hand reposing between his own, hearing the accents of that persuasive voice, which had almost descended to the depths of prayer, felt his anger all at once yield to admiration.

"What do I ask?" said he. "To see you again."

"Impossible! utterly impossible."

"If only for once — one hour, a minute, a second."

"I tell you it is impossible."

"Do you tell me seriously," said Maurice, "that I shall never see you again!"

"Never," said the unknown, in a desponding tone.

"Madame," said Maurice, "you certainly jest with me." Then, raising his noble head, he shook his hanging curls like a man wishing to escape from some power which, in spite of himself, still bound him. The unknown regarded him with an undefinable expression. It was evident she had not altogether escaped the sentiment she had inspired.

"Listen," said she, after a moment's silence, inter-

rupted only by a sigh, which Maurice had in vain endeavored to suppress. "Swear to me, upon your honor, to shut your eyes the moment I desire you to do so, and to keep them closed while you count sixty. Mind, upon your honor."

"If I swear, what will happen to me?"

"It will happen that I will prove my gratitude to you in a manner that I faithfully promise you I will never again to any other person, should he even do more for me than you have done, which would be no easy matter."

"But, at least, am I not to know —"

"No; trust to me. You will see —"

"In truth, Madame, I know not whether you are angel or demon."

"Will you swear it?"

"Yes; I swear to do as you desire me."

"Whatever occurs, you will not open your eyes — whatever happens. You understand? even if you should feel yourself struck with a poniard."

"You bewilder me. My word of honor required with so much urgency?"

"Swear, then, Monsieur. It appears to me that you run no great risk in so doing."

"Well, I swear," said Maurice, "whatever may happen," closing his eyes.

He hesitated.

"Let me see you only once more — only once more," said he. "I entreat you."

The young woman let fall her hood, with a smile not quite free from coquetry, when, by the light of the moon, which at this moment shed its lustre between two clouds, he again beheld, for the second time, the raven hair hanging in masses of shining curls, the beautifully arched and

pencilled eyebrows overshadowing the almond-shaped eyes, so soft and languishing, an exquisitely formed nose, and lips fresh and brilliant as coral.

"Oh, you are beautiful, lovely, divine!" said Maurice.

"Shut your eyes," said the unknown.

Maurice obeyed.

The young woman took both his hands within her own, and placed him in the desired position.

Suddenly he felt a warm perfume pervade his face, and lips slightly touch his mouth, leaving between his lips the disputed ring.

All passed rapid as thought. Maurice experienced a sensation almost amounting to pain, so deep was it and unexpected, penetrating to his very inmost soul.

He made a brusque movement, and extended his arms before him:

"Your oath!" said a voice, already in the distance.

Maurice clasped his hands over his eyes the more strenuously to resist the strong inclination he felt to perjure himself. He counted no more; he thought no more, but remained tottering, his nerves totally unstrung.

In about an instant he heard a noise like that of a door closing a few paces distant from him; then again everything was silent. Then he removed his hand, and opened his eyes, looking round about him like a man just awakened from a deep sleep, and might, perhaps, have fancied all that had occurred a passing dream, had he not held between his lips the identical ring, proving that the adventure, however incredible, was an incontestable reality.

CHAPTER IV.

MANNERS OF THE TIMES.

WHEN Maurice came to himself, he looked around, but saw only the gloomy, dirty alleys extending to his right and left. He essayed to find out exactly where he was, that he might recognize it again; but his mind was disturbed, the night was dark, and the moon, which for a moment had appeared to light up the lovely face of the fair unknown, had again retired behind the clouds. The young man, after a moment of cruel incertitude, retraced his steps toward his own house, situated in the Rue de Roule.

Arriving at the Rue Sainte Avoie, Maurice was much surprised at the number of patrols in motion in that quarter of the Temple.

"What is the matter now, Sergeant?" inquired he, of the chief of patrol, who, all on the alert, had just been thoroughly searching the Rue des Fontaines.

"What is it?" said the sergeant. "It is this, *mon officier*. It was intended this night to carry off the woman Capet, and the whole nest besides."

"How was that?"

"A band of Royalists had, I do not know how, procured the password, and introduced themselves into the Temple in the costume of chasseurs of the National Guard. Fortunately, he who represented the corporal, when speaking to the officer on guard, addressed him as 'Monsieur.' He sold himself, — the aristocrat!"

"The devil!" said Maurice; "and have they not arrested the conspirators?"

"No. The Royalists reached the street, and dispersed."

"And is there any hope of capturing any of these fellows?"

"There is only one among the number of sufficient importance to arrest, — that is the chief, a very slight man, who had been introduced among the men on guard by one of the municipals of the service. We gave the villain chase, but he found a door behind, and fled through the Madelonnettes."

Under any other circumstances, Maurice would have remained for the rest of the night with the patriots who guarded the safety of the Republic; but since one short hour, love of country was no longer his sole engrossing thought. He continued his way, and the tidings he had just learned were soon banished from his mind by the recent stirring events in which he had himself taken so active a part. Besides, these pretended attempts at rescue had become very frequent, and the patriots themselves were aware that under certain circumstances politicians made use of them to advance their own ends; therefore, this news caused our young Republican no great disquietude.

On returning home, Maurice found his "official" (at this epoch they had no longer servants), — Maurice, say we, found his official waiting, but who, while waiting, had fallen asleep, and while sleeping snored uneasily. He awoke him, and with all due regard for his fellow-man, made him pull off his boots, then dismissed him, that he might not interrupt his cogitations, and jumping into bed, it being very late, and he also having youth on his side, slept soundly, notwithstanding the preoccupation of his thoughts.

The next day he discovered a letter on his *table-de-nuit*. This letter was written in a clear, elegant hand, but unknown to him. He looked at the seal. Engraved on it was the single English word, "Nothing." The letter merely contained these words, "Thank you. Everlasting gratitude in exchange for everlasting forgetfulness." Maurice summoned his domestic (the true patriot never rang, the bell denoted servility; indeed, many officials only entered the service of their masters on this express condition).

The official of Maurice had received, nearly thirty years before, at the baptismal font, the name of John; but in '92 he was, by private authority, rebaptized (John savoring of Aristocracy and Deism), and now called himself "Scævola."

"Scævola," demanded Maurice, "do you know where this letter came from?"

"No, Citizen."

"Who brought it to you?"

"The concierge."

"And who brought it to him?"

"A messenger, no doubt, since it has no post-mark."

"Go down, and request the concierge to walk up."

The concierge complied, because it was Maurice who made the request, and he was much beloved by all the officials with whom he was concerned in any way; but at the same time the concierge declared that had it been any other tenant, he should have asked him to walk down.

The concierge was called Aristide.

Maurice interrogated him. It was a stranger who had brought the letter, about eight in the morning. The young man multiplied his questions, and varied them in every possible shape, but could elicit nothing further.

Maurice requested his acceptance of six francs, also desiring, if this stranger again presented himself, that he would follow him, without appearing to do so, and inform him (Maurice) where he went.

We hasten to say, that, much to the satisfaction of Aristide, who felt himself rather insulted by this proposition, the man returned no more.

Maurice remained alone, crushing the letter with vexation; he drew the ring from his finger, and placed it with the crumpled letter upon the *table-de-nuit*, then turned toward the wall, with the foolish idea of sleeping afresh; but at the end of an hour Maurice, relinquishing his attempted coolness, kissed the ring and re-read the letter. The ring was a splendid sapphire; the letter, as we have said, was a charming little billet, displaying its aristocracy in every line.

As Maurice re-read and examined it, the door opened. Maurice hastily replaced the ring on his finger, and concealed the note under his pillow. Was this the modesty of newly awakened love; or was it the shame of a patriot, who would not wish it to be known that he was in relation with people imprudent enough to write such a billet, of which the perfume alone was sufficient to compromise both the hand that penned it and the hand that received it?

He who entered was a young man attired as a patriot, but a patriot of surpassing elegance. His jacket was composed of fine cloth, his breeches of cashmere, and his stockings of fine striped silk. As to his bonnet, it might have shamed from the elegance of its form and splendid purple color even those of the Trojan Paris himself. Added to all this, he carried in his belt a pair of pistols of the royal manufacture of Versailles, and a short sabre like those of the pupils of Champ-de-Mars.

"Ah! thou sleepest, Brutus," said the new-comer, "and the country is in danger. *Fi, donc!*"

"No, Lorin," said Maurice, laughing, "I do not sleep, I dream."

"Yes, I understand, of Eucharis."

"Well, as for me, I cannot understand."

"Bah!"

"Of whom do you speak? Who is this Eucharis?"

"Why the woman —."

"What woman?"

"The woman of the Rue Saint Honoré, — the woman of the patrol, the unknown, the woman for whom you and I risked our heads last night."

"Oh, yes," said Maurice, who knew perfectly well what his friend would say, and only feigned ignorance, "the unknown."

"Well, who was she?"

"I know nothing about her."

"Was she pretty?"

"Pshaw!" said Maurice, pouting his lips disdainfully.

"A poor woman forgotten in some love adventure.

"Yes; weak creatures that we are,
'T is Love that ever tortures man."

"Possibly," said Maurice, to whom such an idea was at this moment peculiarly repugnant, and who would have much preferred finding the unknown to be even a conspirator rather than a light woman.

"And where does she live?"

"I know nothing concerning her."

"Come, now; you know nothing, that 's impossible!"

"Why so?"

"You escorted her back."

"She escaped from me at the Bridge Marie —"

"Escaped from you!" cried Lorin, with a roar of laughter; "a woman escape from you!

> "Say, can the trembling dove elude
> The vulture, — tyrant of the air;
> The fawn, on whom the tiger rude
> Springs from his solitary lair."

"Lorin," said Maurice, "I wish you would accustom yourself to speak like other people. You annoy me horribly with your atrocious poetry."

"To speak like other people, indeed! Now, it appears to me I speak better than most people. I speak as the Citizen Demoustier, both in prose and poetry. As for my poetry, *mon cher*, I know a certain Emilie who does not consider it so bad. But to return to yours."

"My poetry!"

"No; your Emilie."

"Have I an Emilie?"

"Ah, ah! your gazelle may have turned tigress, and shown her teeth in a manner that may not have pleased you, although in love."

"I in love?" said Maurice, shaking his head.

"Yes, you in love.

> "Deadly are the bolts of Jove,
> But deadlier far the shafts of love."

"Lorin," said Maurice, arming himself with a pipe-key which lay upon the table; "I swear that if you will spout verses I will whistle."

"Then let us talk politics; besides, that brought me here. Have you heard the news?"

"I know that Widow Capet wished to escape."

"Oh, that is nothing!"

"What more is there, then?"

"The famous Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is in Paris!"

"Is that true?" said Maurice, raising himself to a sitting posture. "When did he come?"

"Yesterday evening."

"But how?"

"Disguised as a chasseur of the National Guard. A woman who is thought to be an aristocrat, disguised as a woman of the people, took him the clothes to the barrier gate; an instant afterward they came in arm-in-arm. It was not till after they had passed that the suspicion of the sentinel was excited. He had seen the woman pass with a bundle and repass accompanied by a soldier, when it suddenly struck him something was wrong, and he ran after them. They had disappeared in a hôtel of the Rue Saint Honoré, where the door was opened as if by magic. The hôtel had a second point of egress, leading on to the Champs Elysées. *Bon soir* to the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge and his companion; they had both vanished. Our rulers will demolish the hôtel and guillotine the proprietor, but that will not deter the chevalier from renewing the attempt which has hitherto failed; it is four months since his first failure, and yesterday was his second."

"Is he not arrested?" demanded Maurice.

"Ah! well. Yes, *mon cher*, as well attempt to stop Proteus, arrest Proteus; you know the trouble Aristæus had to accomplish it, —

"'Pastor Aristæus, fugiens Peneïa Tempe.'"

"Take care," said Maurice, carrying the key to his mouth.

"Take care yourself, for this time you will not whistle at me, but at Virgil."

"That is very true, and as long as you do not translate him I have nothing to say. Now, to return to the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"We agree that he is a brave man."

"The fact is, that to undertake such things he must possess immense courage."

"Or intense adoration."

"Do you believe, then, in the love of the chevalier for the queen?"

"I do not believe it. I only mention what report says. Besides, she has turned the brains of so many others, that this would not be at all surprising. She once fascinated Barnave, they say."

"Never mind; the chevalier must have had confederates even in the Temple."

"Very possibly, —

"Love breaks through bars,
And laughs at bolts."

"Lorin!"

"Ah! it is true."

"Then you think like the rest?"

"Why not?"

"Because according to your account the queen must have had already two hundred lovers."

"Two, three, four hundred. She is quite handsome enough for that. I do not say that she loves them; but in short, they love her. All the world beholds the sun, but the sun does not see all the world."

"You say, then, that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge —"

"I say they are on his track at this moment, and if he escapes this time the bloodhounds of the Republic, he will be a cunning fox."

"And what does the Commune in all this affair?"

"The Commune is about to issue a decree, by which every house (like an open register) must display on the front the name of every inhabitant, both male and female.

This is realizing the dream of the ancients, — why should there not be a window in every breast, that all the world may see what passes there?"

"An excellent idea that," said Maurice.

"To place windows in men's breasts?"

"No; but to place a list of names on every door."

Maurice felt, in fact, that this might be the means of assisting him to discover the unknown, or at least afford him some clew whereby he might be able to trace her.

"Is it not so?" said Lorin. "I have already betted this measure will secure us a batch of five hundred aristocrats. By the bye, we have received this morning, at our club, a deputation of enrolled Volunteers; they arrived conducted by our adversaries of last night, whom I had not abandoned till dead drunk, — they came, I tell you, with garlands of flowers and immortal crowns."

"Indeed," replied Maurice, laughing; "and how many were there?"

"They were thirty, and were shaved, wearing bouquets in their button-holes.

"'Citizens of the Club of Thermopyles,' said the orator, 'as true patriots, we wish the union of Frenchmen not to be interrupted by any misunderstanding; we therefore come to fraternize with you anew.'"

"Well, what then?"

"Then we again fraternized, and in this reiteration, as Diafoirus expresses himself, we raised an altar to the country, with the table of the secretary and two carafes in which the nosegays were deposited. As you were the hero of the feat, you were three times summoned to appear, that you might be crowned; but as you did not reply, seeing you were not present, and it was necessary to crown something, they crowned the bust of Washington. This was the order of the ceremony."

As Lorin concluded this statement, which at this epoch had nothing of burlesque, a noise was heard proceeding from the street; and drums, first heard in the distance, now approached nearer and nearer. This, at that period, was the common way of issuing general orders.

"What is all that?" said Maurice.

"The proclamation of the decree of the Commune," said Lorin.

"I will run to the station," said Maurice, leaping from his bed, and calling his servant to assist him.

"I will return home and go to bed," said Lorin. "I had not two hours' sleep last night, thanks to those outrageous Volunteers. If they only fight a little, let me sleep; but if they fight much, come and fetch me."

"But why are you so smart to-day?" said Maurice, eyeing him all over as he rose to withdraw.

"Because on my way here I am obliged to pass the 'Rue Béthisy,' and in the Rue Béthisy, on the third flat, is a window which always opens when I pass."

"Then you do not fear being taken for a fop?"

"I a fop! I am, on the contrary, known for a French sans-culotte. But one must make some sacrifice to the softer sex. The worship of the country does not exclude that of love; indeed, one commands the other: —

"Our Republicans profess
We should follow ancient lore;
Beauty we prize none the less,
That we love our freedom more."

Dare to whistle to that, and I denounce you as an aristocrat. Adieu, *mon ami.*"

Lorin held out his hand to Maurice, which the young secretary cordially shook, and went out thinking of a sonnet to Chloris.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT SORT OF MAN THE CITIZEN MAURICE LINDEY WAS.

WHILE Maurice Lindey, having dressed quickly, proceeds to the section of the Rue Lepelletier, of which, as we already know, he was secretary, we will endeavor to lay before the public the antecedents of this young man, introduced upon the scene by one of those impulses so familiar to powerful and generous natures.

The young man had spoken the plain truth the preceding evening, when in reply he had said his name was Maurice Lindey, resident in the Rue du Roule. He might have added he was a child of that half aristocracy accorded to the gentlemen of the robe. His ancestors, for two hundred years, had distinguished themselves by that invariable parliamentary opposition which had rendered so illustrious the names of Molé and Maupeou. His father, honest Lindey, who had passed his life grumbling against despotism, when on the fourteenth of July, '89, the Bastille had fallen by the hands of the people, died from sudden fright and the shock of seeing despotism replaced by a liberty militant, leaving his only son independent in fortune and republican in principle.

The Revolution which had closely followed this great event found Maurice in all the vigor and maturity of manhood befitting a champion about to enter the lists; his republican education improved by his assiduous attendance of the clubs, and by his reading all the pamphlets of that period. God alone knows how many

Maurice had read. Deep and rational contempt for the hierarchy, philosophical consideration of the elements which form the social body, absolute denial of all nobility which is not personal, impartial appreciation of the past, ardor for new ideas, a sympathy with the people which was blended with a belief in aristocratic organizations, — such were the morals, not of the hero we should have chosen, but of him whom the journal from which we draw our facts has given us as the hero of our narrative.

As to his personal appearance, he was in height five feet eight inches, from twenty-five to twenty-six years of age, and muscular as Hercules. His beauty was of the cast characteristic of the Frank, — that is to say, fair complexion, blue eyes, curling chestnut hair, rosy cheeks, and ivory teeth.

After the portrait of the man comes the position of the citizen. Maurice, not rich, but still independent, bore a name much respected, and above all popular. Maurice, known by his liberal education and principles still more liberal than his education, — Maurice placed himself, so to speak, at the head of a party composed of all the young citizen-patriots. It was well that with the sans-culottes he passed for rather lukewarm, and with the sectionaries as rather foppish. But the sans-culottes no longer remembered his lukewarmness when they saw him snap in twain the knotted cudgels, and the sectionaries pardoned his elegance when he one day scientifically planted a blow between two eyes that had been for some time watching him in an offensive manner.

And now for the physical, moral, and civic combined. Maurice had assisted at the taking of the Bastille; he had been on the expedition to Versailles, had fought like a lion on the 10th of August; and in this memorable journey, it is only justice to observe, he had killed as

many patriots as Swiss, — not being more willing to tolerate an assassin in a blouse than an enemy to the Republic in a red coat. It was he who in order to exhort the defenders of the chateau to surrender themselves, and to prevent the shedding of blood, threw himself before the mouth of a cannon which a Parisian artillery-man was about to discharge; it was he who by a window first entered the Louvre, regardless of the firing of five hundred Swiss and as many gentlemen in ambush; and when he perceived the signal of surrender, his avenging sword had already cut through more than ten uniforms. Then, seeing his friends leisurely massacring some prisoners, who having thrown down their arms and clasping their hands supplicated for life, he furiously attacked these friends, which gained for him a reputation worthy of the good days of Rome and of Greece. War declared, Maurice enrolled himself, and departed for the frontier in the rank of lieutenant, with the first 1500 volunteers the city sent against the invaders, which volunteers were each day to be followed by 1500 others.

At the first battle in which he assisted — that is to say at Jemappes — he was struck by a ball, which after having divided the muscles of his shoulder lodged against the bone. The representative of the people knew Maurice, and sent him back to Paris for surgical treatment.

For a whole month, consumed by fever, he tossed upon his bed of suffering; but in January was able to resume his command, if not by name, at least in fact, of the club of Thermopyles, — that is to say of one hundred young men of the Parisian citizens, armed to oppose any attempt in favor of the tyrant Capet. And yet more, Maurice, with contracted brows, dilated eyes, and pale face, his heart filled with a strange mixture of moral hatred and physical pity, assisted, sword in hand, at the execution of the

king, and perhaps he alone of all that throng remained silent when the head of the son of Saint Louis fell on the scaffold; and then Maurice only raised on high his redoubtable sabre, while his friends, loudly shouting *Vive la liberté*, omitted to notice that on this occasion at least one voice did not unite itself with their own.

This was the individual who on the morning of the 14th of March bent his steps toward the Rue Lepelletier, and of whose stormy career our history will furnish further details.

Toward 10 o'clock, Maurice reached the section of which he was the secretary. The commotion was great. The question in agitation was, to vote an address to the Convention in order to repress the conspiracies of the Girondins. They impatiently awaited the arrival of Maurice.

The only subject talked about was the return of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, the audacity with which this arch-conspirator had for the second time entered Paris, where he well knew a price was now fixed on his head.

To this circumstance was attributed the attempt made the preceding evening on the Temple, and each one expressed his hatred and indignation against the traitors and aristocrats.

Contrary to the general expectation, Maurice appeared preoccupied and silent, wrote down the proclamation, finished his employment in three hours, demanded if the sitting had terminated, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, took his hat, and proceeded toward the Rue Saint Honoré.

Arrived there, Paris appeared quite different to him. He revisited the corner of the Rue du Coq, where during the night he had first seen the lovely unknown struggling

in the hands of soldiers. Thence he proceeded to the Pont Marie, the same road he had travelled by her side, stopping where the different patrols had stopped them, repeating in the same places (as if they had preserved an echo of their words) the sentences exchanged between them; only it was now one o'clock in the afternoon, and the sun, shining brilliantly upon this walk, reminded him at every step of the occurrences of the past night.

Maurice crossed the bridges, and entered directly the Rue Victor, as it was then called.

"Poor woman," murmured Maurice, "she did not reflect yesterday that the duration of the night was only twelve hours, and that her secret would not in all probability last longer than the night. By the light of the sun, I will endeavor to find the door through which she vanished, and who knows but I may perhaps even see her at a window?"

He then entered the old Rue Saint Jacques, and placed himself in the same spot as the unknown had placed him on the preceding evening. For an instant he closed his eyes, perhaps foolishly expecting the kiss he had then received would again impress his lips. But he felt nothing but the remembrance; 't is true that burned yet.

Maurice opened his eyes and saw two little streets, one to the right, the other to the left. They were muddy, dirty, and badly paved, furnished with barriers, cut by little bridges thrown over a kennel. There might be seen the beams of arches, nooks, corners, and twenty doors propped up, fast falling into decay. Here was hard labor in all its misery, here was misery in all its hideousness. Here and there was a garden enclosed by a fence, others by palisades of poles, some by walls;

skins were hanging in the out-houses, diffusing around that disgusting odor always arising from a tanyard.

Maurice's search lasted for nearly two hours, during which he found nothing, and divined nothing, and ten times he had retraced his steps to consider where he was. But all his efforts were in vain, his search was a fruitless one, as all trace of the young woman seemed to have been effaced by the fog and rain of the previous night.

"Truly," said Maurice, "I must be in a dream. This filthy place could not for an instant have afforded refuge for my beautiful fairy of last night."

There was, in this wild Republican, more real poetry than in his friend of the Anacreontic quatrains, since he clung to this idea, fearful to sully, even in thought, the spotless purity of the unknown. But all hope had now forsaken him.

"Adieu," said he; "mysterious beauty, you have treated me like a child and a fool. Would she have led me here if she really lived in this wretched locality? No; she would only pass as a swan over the infected marsh, and like a bird in the air leave no trace behind."

CHAPTER VI.

THE TEMPLE.

THE same day and the same hour, when Maurice, disappointed and unhappy, repassed the Bridge de la Tournelle, several municipals, accompanied by Santerre, Commandant of the Parisian National Guard, made a visit of inquiry to the Temple, which had been transformed into a prison, since the 13th of August, 1792.

The visit was made especially to a portion of the third story, consisting of an antechamber and three rooms. One of these chambers was occupied by two females, a young girl, and a child of nine years old, all dressed in mourning. The elder of the females was about seven or eight and thirty. She was seated at a table reading.

The second, whose age appeared twenty-eight or twenty-nine, was engaged on a piece of tapestry.

The young girl, who was about fourteen, was seated near the child, who, ill and in bed, closed his eyes as if asleep, although that was utterly impossible, owing to the noise made by the municipals. While some moved the beds, others examined their clothes and linen ; the rest, when their search was concluded, remained rudely staring at the unfortunate prisoners, who never even raised their eyes, — the one from her book, the other from her embroidery, and the third from her brother.

The eldest of these women was tall, handsome, and very pale. She appeared to concentrate all her attention on her book, although in all probability her eyes read, but

not her mind. One of the municipals approached her, brutally snatched away her book, and flung it into the middle of the room. The prisoner stretched her hand across the table, took up another book, and continued to read.

The Montagnard made a furious gesture, as if he would take away the second, as he had the first; but at this attempt, which startled the prisoner at her embroidery near the window, the young girl sprang forward, and encircling the reader's head with her arms, weeping, exclaimed, "My poor mother! my poor mother!" and then embraced her. As she did so the prisoner placed her mouth to her ear, and whispered: "Marie, there is a letter concealed in the stove; remove it."

"Come! come!" said the municipal, brutally dragging the young girl toward him, and separating her from her mother, "shall you soon have finished embracing?"

"Sir," said the girl, "has the Convention decreed that children shall not embrace their mothers?"

"No; but it has decreed that traitors, aristocrats, and *ci-devants* shall be punished. That is why I am here to interrogate you. Answer, Antoinette."

She who was thus grossly accosted did not even deign to look at her examiner, but turned her head aside, while a flush passed over her face, pale with grief and furrowed with tears.

"It is impossible," said he, "that you are ignorant of the attempt last night. Whence came it?"

The prisoners still maintained silence.

"Answer, Antoinette," said Santerre, approaching her, without remarking the almost frenzied horror which had seized the young woman at sight of this man, who, on the morning of the 21st of January, conducted Louis XVI. from the Temple to the scaffold. "Reply. They were

conspiring last night against the Republic, and seeking your escape from the captivity in which you are kept till you receive that punishment of your crimes which the will of the people may inflict upon you. Tell me, do you know who are the conspirators?"

Marie started at the harsh tone of that voice, which she endeavored to fly from by removing her chair to the greatest distance possible, but replied no more to this question than to the former ones, paid no more deference to Santerre than she had done to the municipal.

"You are then determined not to reply?" said Santerre, stamping his foot furiously.

The prisoner took up a third volume from the table, Santerre turned himself away. The brutal power of this man who commanded 80,000 men, who had only need of a gesture to drown the voice of the dying Louis XVI., was defeated by the dignity of a poor prisoner, whose head he could cause to fall, but whose will he could not bend.

"And you, Elizabeth," said he, addressing the other lady, who at that instant ceased from her embroidery to join her hands in prayer, not to these men, but to God, "will you reply?"

"I do not know what you ask," said she; "therefore I cannot reply."

"*Morbleu!* Citizen Capet," said Santerre, impatiently, "I think what I say is sufficiently clear too. I again tell you, that yesterday an attempt was made for your escape; and you certainly must know the culprits."

"Having no communication with those outside, Monsieur, we cannot possibly tell what people do, either for or against us."

"Very well," said the municipal; "we will now hear what your nephew will say."

And he approached the bed of the young dauphin. At this menace, Marie Antoinette suddenly rose.

"Monsieur," said she, "my son is ill, and now asleep — do not wake him."

"Reply then."

"I know nothing."

The municipal walked straight to the bed of the little prisoner, who, as we have said, feigned sleep.

"Come, wake up, Capet," said he, shaking him roughly.

The child opened his eyes and smiled.

The municipals then surrounded his bed.

The queen, agitated with fear and grief, made a sign to her daughter, who, profiting by this moment, glided from the apartment into the room adjoining, opened the mouth of the stove, drew out a letter and burned it; then, re-entering the room, reassured her mother with a glance.

"What do you want with me?" asked the sick child.

"To inquire if you heard nothing during the night?"

"No; I was asleep."

"You are very fond of sleep, it seems."

"Yes; for when I sleep I dream."

"And what do you dream?"

"That I again see my father, whom you killed."

"Then you heard nothing!" said Santerre, quickly.

"Nothing."

"These wolf's cubs are, in truth, well-agreed with the she-wolf," said the municipal, furious with rage. "There has been, notwithstanding, a plot."

The queen smiled.

"She defies us, the Austrian!" cried the municipal. "Well, since it is thus, let us execute in all its rigor the decree of the Commune. Get up, Capet."

"What would you do?" said the queen, forgetting

herself. "Do you not see my son is ill, and suffering from fever? Do you wish to kill him?"

"Your son," said the municipal, "is the cause of constant alarm to the Council of the Temple; he is the point at which all the conspirators aim, and flatter themselves they shall carry you all off together. Well, let them come. Tison — call Tison."

Tison was a species of journeyman, charged with all the heavy household work in the prison. He appeared. He was a man of forty years old, much sunburnt, of a rude and ferocious aspect, with matted black hair overhanging his eyebrows.

"Tison," said Santerre, "who came yesterday to bring the prisoners' food?"

Tison gave the name.

"And their linen, who brought it to them?"

"My daughter."

"Then your daughter is a laundress?"

"Certainly."

"And you gave her the washing of the prisoners?"

"Why not? She might as well gain that as another; it is no longer the tyrant's money, but belongs to the nation, who pays for them."

"You were told to examine the linen with the greatest attention."

"Well, do I ever fail in my duty? In proof of which, they had yesterday a handkerchief tied in two knots. I took it to the Council, who ordered my wife to undo the knots, iron, and return it to Madame Capet, without saying anything about it."

At this remark of two knots being tied in the pocket-handkerchief, the queen trembled, the pupils of her eyes dilated, and she and Madame Elizabeth exchanged hasty glances.

"Tison," said Santerre, "your daughter is a person of whose patriotism no one can entertain a doubt; but when she leaves the Temple to-day she returns there no more."

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" said Tison, terrified, "what are you saying to me? Shall I not see my daughter except when I go out?"

"You shall go out no more," said Santerre.

Tison looked wildly around, without allowing his eye to remain fixed on any particular object, and suddenly exclaimed, "I am not to go out; that is it, is it? Well, then, I will go out altogether. Give me my dismissal. I am neither traitor nor aristocrat, that I should be detained in prison. I tell you I will go out."

"Citizen," said Santerre, "obey the orders of the Commune, and be silent; or I tell you it may be all the worse for you. Remain here and watch all that passes. There is an eye on you. I warn you."

During this time the queen, who thought herself for a moment forgotten, recovered by degrees, and replaced her son in his bed.

"Desire your wife to come up," said the municipal to Tison.

He obeyed without a word. The threats of Santerre had rendered him as meek as a lamb.

Tison's wife came up.

"Come here, Citizeness," said Santerre; "we are going into the antechamber; during that time, search all the prisoners."

"Listen, wife," said Tison; "they are not going to permit our daughter to come to the Temple any more."

"What! they will not permit our daughter to come here! Then we shall see her no more?"

Tison mournfully shook his head.

"What do you say to this?"

"I say we shall make a report to the Council of the Temple, and the Council will decide it. In the mean time —"

"In the mean time I will see my daughter again."

"Silence," said Santerre, "you were brought here for the purpose of searching the prisoners; search them, then, and afterward we shall see —"

"But — now —"

"Oh, oh!" said Santerre, knitting his brows, "you are contaminated, it appears to me."

"Do as the Citizen General tells you, wife," Tison said; "afterward, we shall see."

And Tison regarded Santerre with a humble smile.

"Very well," said the woman; "go, then, I am ready to search."

The men went out.

"My dear Madame Tison," said the queen, "you know —"

"I only know, Citizeness Capet," said the horrible woman, gnashing her teeth, "that you are the cause of all the misery of the people; and also that I have reason to suspect you, and you know it."

Four men waited at the door, to assist Tison's wife, if the queen offered any resistance.

The search commenced on the queen.

There was found on her person a handkerchief tied in three knots, which unfortunately appeared a reply to the one spoken of by Tison; a pencil, a scapulary, and some sealing-wax.

"Ah! I knew it," said Tison's wife; "I have often told the municipals she wrote, the Austrian! The other day I found a lump of sealing-wax in the socket of the candlestick."

"Ah, Madame," said the queen, in a supplicating tone, "only show the scapulary, I entreat you."

"Yes," said the woman, "I feel pity for you, who have felt so much pity for me to take my daughter from me."

Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale had nothing found upon them.

The woman Tison recalled the municipals, who entered, Santerre at their head. She showed them the articles found upon the queen, which, as they passed from hand to hand, afforded subject for an infinite variety of conjectures; but the handkerchief tied in three knots excited, above all, the imagination of these persecutors of the royal race.

"Now," said Santerre, "we are going to read the decree of the Convention to you."

"What decree?" demanded the queen.

"The decree which orders you to be separated from your son."

"Is it, then, true that this decree exists?"

"Yes; the Convention has too much regard for the health of a child confided to its guardianship, to leave him in the care of a mother so depraved."

The eyes of the queen flashed lightning.

"But make some accusation at least, tigers that you are."

"That is not at all difficult," said a municipal; and he pronounced one of those infamous accusations brought by Suetonius against Agrippina.

"Oh!" cried the queen, standing, pale with indignation, "I appeal from it to the heart of every mother."

"That is all very fine," said a municipal; "but we have already been here two hours, and cannot lose the whole day. Get up, Capet, and follow us."

"Never, never!" cried the queen, rushing between

the municipals and the young Louis, and preparing to defend the approach to his bed, as a tigress the entrance to her den. "Never will I permit you to carry away my child!"

"Oh, Messieurs," said Madame Elizabeth, clasping her hands in the most touching attitude of prayer, "Messieurs, in the name of Heaven, have pity on us two mothers."

"Then speak," said Santerre; "state the names, avow the project of your accomplices; explain what they wished to intimate by the knots made in the pocket-handkerchief brought with your linen by Tison's daughter, and the meaning of those tied in the handkerchief found in your pocket, and on these conditions I will leave you your child."

A look from Madame Elizabeth seemed to implore the queen to submit to this dreadful sacrifice.

But quietly brushing from her eye a tear which sparkled like a diamond, "Adieu, my son!" cried she; "never forget your father who is in heaven, or your mother who will soon join him there, and never omit to repeat morning and evening the prayer I have taught you. Adieu! my son."

She gave him a last kiss; then rising calm and inflexible, "I know nothing, Messieurs," said she, "do as you please."

But the queen must have required more fortitude than is contained in the heart of a woman, and above all of a mother. She fell back fainting upon a chair, while they carried away the child, who with fast flowing tears held out his arms, but uttered not a single word or cry.

The door closed behind the municipals who carried away the royal child, and the three women remained alone. There was for a moment the deep silence of despair, interrupted only by occasional sobs.

The queen first broke silence.

"My daughter," said she, "that letter?"

"I burned it, as you desired me, mother."

"Without reading it?"

"Without reading it."

"Adieu, then, to the last ray of hope, divine hope!" murmured Madame Elizabeth.

"You are right, my sister, you are right; it is almost beyond endurance." Then turning toward her daughter, "But you at least saw the handwriting, Marie?"

"Yes, mother, for a moment."

The queen rose, went to the door to make sure she was not observed; then drawing a pin from her hair, approached the wall, and from a chink drew out a small paper folded like a letter, and showing it to Madame Royale, "collect your thoughts before you reply, my child," said she; "was the writing the same as this?"

"Yes, yes, mother!" cried the princess; "I recognize it!"

"God be praised, then!" cried the queen, falling with fervor on her knees. "If he could write since this morning, he is safe. Thanks, O God! thanks! So noble a friend deserves thy miraculous preservation."

"Of whom do you speak, mother?" demanded Madame Royale. "Who is this friend? Tell me his name, that I may commend him to God in my prayers."

"You are right, my child; never forget it. This name, for it is the name of a gentleman replete with honor and courage, one not devoted to us through ambition, for he has only revealed himself since our misfortunes. He has never seen the queen of France, or rather the queen of France has never seen him, and he devotes his life to her defence. Perhaps he will be recompensed as all virtue is now recompensed, by a dreadful death. But — if he

dies. — Oh! I shall still think of him in heaven. He is called — "

The queen looked uneasily around, then lowering her voice, "He is called the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. Pray for him."

CHAPTER VII.

THE OATH OF THE GAMESTER.

THE attempted abduction however doubtful might be the fact, since if it had any reality it had failed in its very commencement, had excited the anger of some, and the interest of others. What afforded strong probability to the existence of such a project was the fact that the Committee for General Security learned that three weeks, or a month before, a number of emigrants had entered France from different parts of the frontier. It was evident that these people who thus risked their lives did not do so without design, and this design was in all probability to co-operate in carrying off the royal family.

Already, upon the proposition of the Conventionalist Usselin, the terrible decree had been promulgated, which condemned to death all emigrants convicted of having returned to France; all Frenchmen convicted of having intended to emigrate; every individual convicted of having assisted in their flight, or in their return, either a female or male emigrant; and lastly, all citizens convicted of having afforded shelter to an emigrant. With this dreadful law commenced the "Reign of Terror." All that was wanting was the law for suspected persons. The Chevalier de Maison-Rouge was an enemy far too active and audacious for his return to Paris, and his appearance in the Temple, not to call forth the gravest measures. More severe inspections than had previously taken place were made in a number of suspected houses; but with the

exception of some female emigrants who allowed themselves to be taken, and some old men who did not care enough for their few remaining days to dispute with the executioner, their researches produced no other result.

The sections, as may be imagined, were after this event much occupied for several days, and consequently the secretary of the section Lepelletier, one of the most influential in Paris, had little time to think of his unknown fair one. At first, as he had resolved on quitting the old Rue Saint Jacques, he had tried to forget her, but, as his friend Lorin had observed to him, —

> "Alas! endeavoring to forget
> But makes us recollect the more."

Maurice, however, neither said nor confessed anything. He buried in his heart all the details of that adventure which he had been able to conceal from the scrutiny of his friend. But Lorin, who knew Maurice to be of a joyous and hilarious nature, and now saw him constantly sad and thoughtful, seeking solitude, doubted not, to use his own expression, that the rogue Cupid had passed that way. It is remarkable, that, during its eighteen centuries of monarchy, France had had few years so mythological as the year of our Lord 1793.

In the mean time the chevalier was not taken, and he was no more spoken of. The widowed queen, cruelly robbed of her child, contented herself by weeping, in company with her sister and daughter. The young dauphin was consigned to the care of "Simon the Shoemaker," and entered upon that course of martyrdom which, in the short space of two years, was to reunite him with his father and mother. There was a moment's calm. The Montagnard volcano rested before devouring the Girondins.

Maurice felt the weight of this calm, as the heaviness of the atmosphere is felt in stormy weather, and not knowing how to dispose of his leisure, abandoned himself entirely to the ardor of a sentiment which if not actually love itself bordered closely upon it. He re-read his letter, again kissed his beautiful sapphire ring, and resolved (notwithstanding his oath) to make one more attempt, promising himself this should indeed be the last. The young man had first thought he would go to the section of the Jardin des Plantes, and there make inquiry from the secretary, his colleague. But the first idea (and we may add, which he still retained) that the beautiful unknown was mixed up in some political plot, still restrained him, as the thought that any indiscretion on his part might be the means of sending this lovely woman to the Place de la Revolution, and her head to the block, caused his blood to curdle and freeze in his veins. He therefore determined on seeking this adventure alone, and without any further information.

His plan, besides, was very simple. The catalogue of names inscribed on each door would certainly afford him some clew, and then by interrogating the porters he might be able to solve the mystery. In his capacity of secretary of the Rue Lepelletier, he possessed full and entire right to make all inquiries. Besides, Maurice, ignorant of the name of the unknown, was able to judge of it by analogy. It was impossible so lovely a creature should not possess a name in harmony with her form, some name appertaining to sylph, fairy, or angel, since her arrival on earth must have been hailed as that of a superior and supernatural being. This name would then most infallibly guide him.

Maurice then dressed himself in a coat of dark brown cloth, adorned his head with the *bonnet-rouge* worn on

great occasions, and set out on his voyage of discovery alone. He had in his hand one of those knotted cudgels called a *constitution*, which wielded by his vigorous hand was powerful as the club of Hercules, and in his pocket he placed his commission as secretary of the section Lepelletier. These were at once his physical security and his moral guarantee.

He prepared himself to review afresh the Rue Saint Victor, the old Rue Saint Jacques, reading by the light of the declining day all those names (inscribed by hands more or less practised) upon the panels of every door.

Maurice had reached the hundredth house, and consequently read the hundredth list, and nothing had yet occurred to induce him to imagine that he was in the least degree upon the trail of the unknown, as he had fully made up his mind that no name could be hers which did not belong to the class he had imagined, when a good-natured shoemaker, noticing the anxiety and impatience depicted on the young man's countenance, came out with his strap of leather and his punch, and looking at Maurice over his spectacles, —

"Do you wish any information respecting the tenants of this house, Citizen?" said he; "if so, I shall be happy to give it to you."

"Thanks, Citizen," stammered Maurice; "I am looking for the name of a friend."

"Tell me the name, Citizen; I know everybody in this quarter. Where does this friend live?"

"He lived, I think, in the old Rue Saint Jacques; but I fear he has removed."

"But how is he named? I must know that."

Maurice taken thus unawares hesitated for a moment, then pronounced the first name that presented itself to his memory.

"René," said he.

"And what trade?"

Maurice was surrounded by tanneries.

"A journeyman-tanner," said he.

"In that case," said a burgess, who stopped and regarded Maurice with a certain good-nature, not totally exempt from distrust, "you should address yourself to his master."

"That is true," said the door-keeper; "you are quite right, the masters know the names of their workmen; here is Citizen Dixmer, who is manager of a tannery, and has more than fifty workmen in his yard, he can perhaps tell you." Maurice turned round and saw a burgess of commanding figure and mild countenance, the richness of whose attire denoted opulence.

"Only as the citizen porter observes, it is necessary I should know the family name."

"The one I said, — René."

"René is his baptismal name; it is the family name I require. All my workmen sign their family name."

"Upon my word," said Maurice, growing impatient under this species of interrogation, "the family name? I do not know it."

"What," said the burgess, with a smile, in which Maurice thought he discerned more irony than he wished to appear, — "what, not know the surname of your friend!"

"No."

"In that case, it is not probable you will find him," and the burgess, gravely bowing to Maurice, walked a short distance and entered a house in the old Rue Saint Jacques.

"The fact is, that if you do not know his surname," said the porter —

"Well, I do not know it," said Maurice, who would not have been sorry to find some occasion to vent his ill-temper, and was at the moment much inclined to seek a quarrel. "What have you to say to that?"

"Nothing, Citizen, nothing at all; only since you do not know the name of your friend, it is as Citizen Dixmer said more than probable you will not find him," and the citizen porter went into his lodge, shrugging his shoulders. Maurice felt a great inclination to thrash this porter, but he was an old man, and his infirmities saved him. Had the porter been twenty years younger, Maurice would have given a scandalous illustration of the principle, — equal in law, unequal in physical force. Besides, the day was drawing to a close, and he had only a few moments of daylight left. He availed himself of it by returning to the first street, then to the second, examined every door, searched in every nook, looked under every palisade, climbed each wall, threw a glance into the interior of every gateway, looked through the keyholes, knocked at some deserted warehouses without receiving any reply, till at length nearly two hours had elapsed in this useless investigation.

Nine o'clock struck; no more noise was heard, no movement seen in this deserted quarter, whose life seemed to have retired with the light of day. Maurice in despair made a retrograde movement, when all at once, at the winding of a narrow alley, he discerned a light. He immediately ventured into the dark passage, without remarking that at that very moment a curious head, which for the last quarter of an hour (from the midst of a clump of trees, rising above the wall) had followed all his movements, then disappeared suddenly behind this wall. A short time after this head had disappeared, three men came out from a small door in this same wall, went into

the alley where Maurice had preceded them, while a fourth, for greater security, locked the door of entrance into the alley. At the end of the alley, Maurice discovered a court; it was on the opposite side of this court that the light was burning. He knocked at the door of a poor, solitary house, but at the first sound the light was extinguished. He redoubled his efforts, but no one answered his call; he saw they were determined to make no reply, so comprehending that it was only a useless waste of time, he crossed the court and re-entered the alley. At this moment the door of the house turned softly on its hinges, three men came out, and then the sound of a whistle was heard.

Maurice turned round, and saw three shadows within a short distance. He saw in the darkness also (his eyes having become accustomed to this obscurity) the reflection of three glittering blades. He knew that he was hemmed in. He would have brandished his club, but the alley was so narrow that it touched the wall on either side. At the same moment he was stunned by a violent blow on the head. This was an unforeseen assault made upon him by the four men who entered through the door in the wall. Seven men at the same time threw themselves upon Maurice, and notwithstanding a desperate resistance, overpowered him, and succeeded in binding his hands and bandaging his eyes.

Maurice had not even uttered a cry, or called for aid. Strength and true courage are self-reliant, and are ashamed of extraneous aid. Besides, Maurice had often heard that no one would enter this deserted quarter. Maurice was thus, as we have said, thrown down and bound, but had not uttered a single complaint. He had reflected as to what would follow, — that as they had bandaged his eyes they did not intend to kill him directly. At Maurice's

age respite becomes hope. He recovered his presence of mind, and listened patiently.

"Who are you?" demanded a voice, still breathless from the late struggle.

"I am a man they are murdering," replied Maurice.

"What is more, you are a dead man if you speak loud, or call for assistance, or even utter the least cry."

"If I had wished to cry, I need not have waited till now."

"Are you ready to answer my questions?"

"Let me hear them first; I shall then see whether I ought to reply."

"Who sent you here?"

"No one."

"You came then of your own accord?"

"Yes."

"You lie!"

Maurice made a desperate effort to disengage his hands, but it was in vain.

"I never lie," said he.

"In either case, whether you came of your own accord or were sent, you are a spy."

"And you are cowards!"

"We cowards!"

"You are seven or eight against one man bound, and you insult that man. Cowards! cowards! cowards!"

This violence on the part of Maurice, instead of enraging his adversaries, appeared to produce a contrary effect. It was even a proof that the young man was not what they had laid to his charge; a true spy would have trembled, and begged for mercy.

"There is nothing insulting in that," said a voice, milder yet firmer than any that had previously been

heard; "in the times we live in, one may be a spy without being a dishonest man, only it is at the risk of one's life."

"If that is your opinion, you are welcome to question me, I will answer you faithfully."

"What are you doing in this quarter?"

"Looking for a woman."

This excuse was received with a murmur of incredulity; the murmur increased and became a storm.

"You lie!" replied the same voice. "There is no woman in the matter, and we know what we mean by 'woman;' there is no woman to pursue in this quarter. Avow your project, or die."

"Come," said Maurice, "you will not kill me for pleasure, unless you are downright ruffians."

Maurice made a second effort, more violent and unexpected than the first, to disengage his hands from the cord which bound them, when suddenly a cold sensation, sharp and painful, shot through his breast.

Despite himself, Maurice fell back a step.

"Ah! you felt that," said one of the men. "Well, there are eight inches like the inch with which you have just become acquainted."

"Complete your work, then," said Maurice, resignedly; "it will at least soon be over."

"Come now, who are you?" asked the voice which was at once mild and commanding.

"Do you wish to know my name?"

"Yes, your name."

"Maurice Lindey."

"What!" exclaimed a voice, "Maurice Lindey, the revolu — the patriot? Maurice Lindey, secretary of the Lepelletier section?"

These words were pronounced with so much heat that Maurice saw clearly that they were decisive. To reply was in a manner to fix irrevocably his fate.

Maurice was incapable of cowardice. He drew himself up like a Spartan, and said in a firm voice, —

"Yes, Maurice Lindey; yes, Maurice Lindey, the secretary of the section Lepelletier; yes, Maurice Lindey, the patriot, the revolutionist, the Jacobin; Maurice Lindey, in short, whose brightest day on earth will be that on which he will die for liberty."

A death-like silence followed this reply.

Maurice presented his breast, expecting every moment that the blade, whose point he had already felt, would be plunged into his heart.

"Is your statement really true?" asked a voice which betrayed some emotion; "come, young man, do not lie."

"Search my pocket," said Maurice, "and you will find my commission. Look at my shirt-bosom, and if my blood has not effaced them, you will there see embroidered my initials, *M* and *L*."

Maurice at once felt himself lifted by strong arms which bore him a short distance. He heard first one door open, then another; but the second was narrower than the first, for his bearers could scarcely pass through with him.

The murmurs and whispers continued.

"I am lost," thought Maurice. "They are going to tie a stone round my neck and throw me into some hole of the Bièvre."

But in another moment he felt that the men ascended some steps, where the air was warmer, and where they placed him on a seat. He heard a double door shut and

the steps withdraw. He believed that he was left alone. He listened as intently as a man can whose life depends upon a word, and he believed that he heard that same voice whose tones had already struck him as mixing mildness with command, say to the others, —

"Let us deliberate."

CHAPTER VIII.

GENEVIÈVE.

A QUARTER of an hour elapsed, which seemed a century to Maurice. Nothing more natural; young, handsome, vigorous, supported in his strength by a hundred devoted friends, in combination with whom he sometimes dreamed of the accomplishment of great achievements, he found himself all at once without the least preparation in peril of losing his life in an ignominious den of assassins.

He understood that they had shut him up in some chamber; but was he watched?

Again he struggled to break his bonds. His muscles of steel swelled and contracted; the cord cut into his flesh, but did not break.

The most terrible thing was that his hands were fastened behind his back so that he could not remove the bandage from his eyes. If he could only see, he might escape.

As he had made these attempts to free himself without opposition, without anything stirring around him, he concluded that he was alone. The ground under his feet was soft and soundless, might be gravel or perhaps clay. An acrid and pungent smell announced the presence of vegetable matter. Maurice fancied he was in a greenhouse, or some place very like it. He took a step or two, hit the wall, turned, and groping with his hands, felt some garden-tools. He uttered an exclamation of joy.

With unparalleled exertion he examined these tools, one after the other. His flight now became a question of time. If chance, or Providence, granted him five minutes, and if among these tools he found a sharp instrument, he was saved.

He found a spade. From the way in which Maurice was bound, it required a great struggle to raise the spade a sufficient height for his purpose. He at length succeeded, and upon the blade of the spade which he supported against the wall with his back, he at last cut, or rather wore away, the cord which confined his wrists. The operation was tedious, the iron cut slowly. The perspiration streamed from his face; he heard a noise as of some one approaching; with a tremendous effort the cord, half-severed, broke. He could not help giving a cry of joy; now at least he was sure to die in defending himself.

Maurice tore the bandage from his eyes.

He had not been mistaken; he found himself not in a greenhouse, but in a kind of pavilion used as a receptacle for the more delicate plants unable to outlive the winter in the open air. In a corner the gardening implements were stowed away, one of which had been the means of rendering him so important a service. Facing him was a window; he rushed toward it; it was grated, and a man armed with a carbine placed sentinel before it.

On the other side of the garden, about thirty paces distant, rose a small turret, fellow to the one where Maurice remained prisoner. The blind was down, but through the blind a light was visible.

He approached the door and listened; another sentinel paced to and fro before this door. These were the footsteps he had heard.

But from the end of the corridor a confusion of voices resounded. The deliberation had evidently degenerated into disputation. Maurice could not hear distinctly what was said; some words, however, reached him, and amid these words — as if for them only the distance was short — he distinguished plainly, Spy! Poniard! Death!

Maurice redoubled his attention; a door opened, and he heard more distinctly.

"Yes," said one voice, "he is assuredly a spy; he has discovered something, and is certainly sent to take us and our secret unawares. In freeing him we run the risk of his denouncing us."

"But his word," said a voice.

"His word — he will give it only to betray us. Is he a gentleman that we should trust his word?"

Maurice ground his teeth at the idea which some folks still retained, that only a gentleman could keep his oath.

"But he does not know us; how can he denounce us?"

"No; he certainly does not know us nor our occupation, but he knows the address, and will return; next time he will be well accompanied."

This argument appeared conclusive.

"Then," said the voice which several times already had struck Maurice as belonging to the chief, "it is decided."

"Yes, a hundred times yes; I do not comprehend you with your magnanimity. My good sir, if the Committee for the Public Safety caught us, you would see if they acted toward us with so much ceremony."

"You persist, then, in your decision, gentlemen?"

"Without doubt, and you are not, we hope, going to oppose it."

"I have only one voice, gentlemen; it has been in favor of his liberation: you possess six, and they all vote for his death. Let it, then, be death."

Maurice felt the blood freeze in his veins.

"Of course he will howl," said a voice; "have you removed Madame Dixmer?"

"Madame Dixmer!" murmured Maurice; "I begin now to comprehend. I am in the house of the master-tanner who spoke to me in the old Rue Saint Jacques, and who went away laughing because I was unable to tell him the name of my friend. But how can it be to his interest to assassinate me?"

Looking round, Maurice perceived an iron stake with a handle of ash-tree wood.

"In any case," said he, "before they assassinate me, I will kill more than one of them."

And he sprang to secure this harmless instrument, which, in his hand, was to become a formidable weapon. He then retired behind the door, and so placed himself that he could see without being seen. His heart beat so tumultuously that in the deep silence its palpitations might be heard. Suddenly Maurice shuddered from head to foot. A voice had said, —

"If you act according to my advice, you will break a pane, and through the bars kill him with a shot from a carbine."

"Oh, no, no! — not an explosion," said another voice, "that might betray us. Besides, Dixmer, there is your wife."

"I have just looked at her through the blind; she suspects nothing — she is reading."

"Dixmer, you shall decide for us. Do you advocate a shot from the carbine, or a stroke from the poniard?"

"Avoid fire-arms as much as possible — the poniard."

"Then let it be the poniard. Come!"

"Come!" repeated five or six voices, together.

Maurice was a child of the Revolution, with a heart of flint, and in mind, like many others at that epoch, an atheist. But at the word "Come!" pronounced behind the door, which alone separated him from death, he remembered the sign of the cross, which his mother had taught him when an infant he said his prayers at her knee.

Steps approached, stopped; then the key turned in the lock, and the door slowly opened.

During this fleeting moment, Maurice had said to himself, —

"If I do not strike at once, I am a dead man. If I throw myself upon the assassins, I take them unawares — gain first the garden, then the street, and am saved!"

Immediately, with the spring of a lion, and uttering a fierce cry which savored more of menace than terror, he threw down the first two men, who believing him bound and blindfolded were quite unprepared for such an assault, scattered the others, took a tremendous leap over them, thanks to his iron muscles, saw at the end of the corridor a door leading into the garden wide open, rushed toward it, cleared at a bound six steps, found himself in the garden, and guessing his whereabouts as nearly as possible, rushed toward the gate. It was secured by a lock and a couple of bolts. Maurice drew back the bolts, tried to open the lock; but it had no key.

In the mean time his pursuers, who had reached the steps, perceived him.

"There he is!" cried they; "fire upon him, Dixmer, fire! Kill him — kill him!"

Maurice uttered a groan; he was enclosed in the

garden; he measured the walls with his eye — they were ten feet in height.

All this passed in a moment. The assassins rushed forward in pursuit.

Maurice was about thirty paces in advance; he looked about him with the air of a condemned man who seeks the shadow of a chance to save himself. He perceived the turret, the blind, and behind the blind the light.

He made but one bound, — a bound of six feet, — seized the blind, tore it down, passed through the window, smashing it, and alighted in a chamber where a lady sat reading.

The lady rose terrified, calling for help.

"Stand aside, Geneviève; stand aside!" cried the voice of Dixmer, "stand aside that I may kill him!"

And Maurice saw the carbine levelled at him.

But scarcely had the woman looked at him than she uttered a frightful cry, and instead of standing aside, as desired by her husband, rushed between him and the barrel of the gun.

This movement concentrated all Maurice's attention on the generous woman, whose first impulse was to protect him from danger and death.

In his turn he uttered a cry of astonishment.

It was the unknown whom he had so eagerly sought.

"You!" he exclaimed, "you —"

"Silence!" cried she.

Then, turning toward the assassins, who, variously armed, approached the window, —

"Ah! you will not kill him!" cried she.

"He is a spy," said Dixmer, whose usually placid countenance had assumed an expression of stern resolution, — "he is a spy, and therefore must die."

"A spy — he!" said Geneviève; "he a spy! Come

here, Dixmer; I need only say one word to prove that you are strangely deceived."

Dixmer and Geneviève approached the window, and in a low voice she uttered a few words.

The master-tanner raised his head quickly.

"He!" said he.

"He himself," said Geneviève.

"You are certain, quite certain?"

This time the young woman did not reply, but smiling held out her hand to Maurice.

The features of Dixmer now assumed a singular expression of coolness and gentleness. He rested the butt-end of his musket on the ground.

"This is quite another thing," said he.

Then making a sign to his companions to follow, he stepped aside with them, and after saying a few words, they disappeared.

"Conceal that ring," murmured Geneviève; "it is known by every one here."

Maurice quickly drew the ring from his finger, and slipped it into his waistcoat-pocket.

A moment afterward the door of the pavilion opened, and Dixmer, unarmed, advanced toward Maurice.

"Pardon me, Citizen," said he, "that I did not know sooner the obligation I am under to you. My wife, while retaining a grateful remembrance of the service you rendered her on the 10th of March, had forgotten your name. We were therefore completely in ignorance with whom we were concerned; otherwise, believe me, we should not for a moment have entertained suspicion either of your honor or intentions. I therefore again ask your pardon."

Maurice was bewildered; with the greatest difficulty he preserved his equilibrium; he felt his head turn round,

and was near falling. He supported himself against the mantel-piece.

"Why on earth did you wish to kill me?" he asked.

"This is the secret, Citizen," said Dixmer; "I confide it to your keeping. I am, as you already know, a tanner, and principal in this concern. The greater part of the acids I employ in the preparation of my skins are prohibited goods. Now the smugglers have received intelligence of an information laid before the counsel-general. I feared you were an informer. My smugglers were more alarmed than myself at your *bonnet-rouge* and formidable appearance, and I do not conceal from you that your death was resolved upon."

"*Pardieu!* and well I know it," said Maurice; "you tell me no news. I heard your consultation, and have seen your carbine."

"I have already apologized," said Dixmer, in a tone of marked kindness. "You must understand that, thanks to the unsettled state of the times, myself and partner, Monsieur Morand, are likely to realize an immense fortune. We have the furnishing of the military bags, and finish from fifteen hundred to two thousand each day. Owing to this blessed state of things in which we live, the municipality are much occupied, and have not time strictly to examine our accounts, so that it must be confessed we fish a little in troubled waters; the more so because, as I have already told you, the preparatory materials we procure by smuggling allow us to gain two hundred per cent."

"The devil!" said Maurice, "that appears to me an honest living enough, and I can now understand your dread lest a denunciation on my part should put an end to it; but now you know me, you fear me no longer. Is it not so?"

"Ah!" said Dixmer, "I do not even ask your word of honor. Then, citizen, as I said to you before, and I beg you to remember it, between friends," said he, "may I not know your motive for this, young man? But of course, if you wish to keep it secret, you are perfectly at liberty to do so."

"I will tell you, I believe," murmured Maurice.

"It is a woman," said the marquis. "I know there was a woman in it."

"Pardon me, citizen, I am aware some sort of explanation is due to you. Well, then, I sought a rendezvous with the other evening, disguised, and she replied to me from the quarter. I neither know her name, position, nor abode. I only know I am madly in love with her, that she is short —"

Geneviève was tall.

"That she is fair, and of a lively temperament."

Geneviève was a brunette, with large pensive eyes.

"A grisette, in short," continued Maurice; "so to please her, I assumed the popular dress."

"That explains all," said Dixmer, with a faith which a wink did not belie.

Geneviève colored, and feeling herself blush, turned away.

"Poor Citizen Lindey," said Dixmer, laughing; "what a miserable evening we have caused you to pass! and you are about the last I would wish to injure, so excellent a patriot, a brother; but, in short, I believed some concealed spy had usurped your name."

"Let us say no more on the subject," said Maurice, who knew it was time for him to withdraw; "put me on my road, and let us forget —"

"Put you on your road!" exclaimed Dixmer; "let you leave us! no indeed, not yet. I give — or rather my

partner and myself give — a supper to-night to those brave fellows who wished so much to slaughter you a little while ago. I reckon upon your supping with them, that you may see they are not such devils as they appear to be."

"But," said Maurice, overjoyed at the thought of being for a few hours near Geneviève, "I do not know really if I ought to accept — "

"If you ought to accept!" said Dixmer; "I know you ought; these are good and stanch patriots like yourself. Besides, I shall not consider that you have forgiven me unless we break bread together."

Geneviève uttered not a word. Maurice was in torment.

"The fact is," stammered Maurice, "I fear I may be a constraint upon you, Citizen — this dress — my ungentlemanly appearance — "

Geneviève looked timidly toward him.

"We invite you in all kindness," said she.

"I accept your invitation, Citizen," said he, bowing.

"I will go and secure our companions," said Dixmer; "in the mean time, warm yourself, my dear sir."

He went out. Maurice and Geneviève remained alone.

"Ah, Monsieur!" said the young woman, in an accent to which she in vain tried to convey a tone of reproach, "you have failed in your word; you have been exceedingly indiscreet."

"Madame," cried Maurice, "have I in any way compromised you? Ah! in that case, pardon me; I will retire, and never — "

"Goodness!" said she, rising, "you are wounded in the breast; your shirt is stained with blood."

Indeed, upon the fine, white shirt of Maurice — a shirt forming a strange contrast to his coarser clothes — a large red spot of blood had spread itself, and had dried there.

"Do not be under any alarm, Madame," said the young man, "one of the smugglers pricked me with his poniard."

Geneviève turned pale, and taking his hand, —

"Forgive me," said she, "the wrong that has been done you; you saved my life, and I have nearly caused your death."

"Am I not sufficiently recompensed in finding you? You cannot for a moment imagine it was for another that I sought."

"Come with me," said Geneviève, interrupting him; "I will find you some clean linen. Our guests must not see you thus; it would be too great a reproach to them."

"I am a great trouble to you, Madame, I fear," said Maurice, sighing.

"Not at all; I only do my duty; and," she added, "I do it with much pleasure."

Geneviève then conducted Maurice to a large dressing-room, arranged with an air of elegance he had not expected to find in the house of a master-tanner. It is true this master-tanner appeared to be a millionnaire. She then opened the wardrobes.

"Help yourself," said she; "you are at home." She withdrew.

When Maurice came out, he found Dixmer had returned.

"Come! come!" said he, "to table; we only wait for you."

CHAPTER IX.

THE SUPPER.

When Maurice entered with Dixmer and Geneviève into the dining-room, situated in the part of the house where they had first conducted him, the supper was ready but the room vacant. He saw all the guests enter successively. They were six in number, men of agreeable exterior, for the most part young and fashionably dressed; two or three even wore the blouse and red bonnet.

Dixmer introduced Maurice, naming his titles and qualifications. Then, turning toward Maurice, —

"You see," said he, "Citizen Lindey, all those who assist me in my trade. Thanks to the times in which we live, thanks to the revolutionary principles which have effaced all distinction, we all live upon the same footing of sacred equality. Every day we assemble twice at the same table, and I am happy you have been induced to partake of our family repast. Come! to table — citizens, to table."

"And — Monsieur Morand," said Geneviève, timidly, "do we not wait for him?"

"Ah, true!" said Dixmer. "This citizen of whom I have already spoken, Citizen Lindey, is my partner. He conducts, if I may so express myself, the moral part of the establishment. He attends to the writing, keeps the cash, superintends the factories, pays and receives the money, and, in short, works harder than any of us. The result is that he is sometimes rather late. I will go and tell him we are waiting."

At this moment the door opened, and the Citizen Morand entered.

He was a short man, dark, with bushy eyebrows, and wore green spectacles — like a man whose eyes are fatigued from excess of work — concealing his black eyes, but not effectually obstructing their scintillating gleams. At the first words he uttered, Maurice recognized that mild, yet commanding voice engaged in his behalf when endeavoring to save him from becoming a victim to that terrible discussion. He was habited in a brown coat, with large buttons, a white waistcoat; and his fine cambric shirt-frill was often during dinner smoothed by a hand which Maurice, no doubt from its being that of a tradesman, admired much for its beauty and delicacy of appearance.

They all took their seats. Morand was placed on Geneviève's right hand, Maurice on her left. Dixmer sat opposite his wife. The rest of the guests seated themselves promiscuously round an oblong table. The supper was excellent. Dixmer had a capital appetite, and did the honors of the table with much politeness. The workmen, or those who pretended to be such, under this example became excellent companions. The Citizen Morand spoke little, and ate still less; drank scarcely anything, and rarely smiled. Maurice, perhaps from the reminiscences his voice awakened, felt for him immediately a lively sympathy, only he was in doubt as to his age; and this rather annoyed him, as sometimes he imagined him to be a man of forty or forty-five years, and sometimes to be quite young.

Dixmer, on placing himself at table, felt obliged to offer some explanation to his guests for the admission of a stranger into their little circle. He acquitted himself like an artless man, one unaccustomed to deceit; but the guests, as it seemed, were not hard to manage on this

point; for, notwithstanding the awkwardness displayed by the manufacturer of hides in the introduction of the young man, they all appeared perfectly satisfied.

Maurice regarded him with astonishment.

"Upon my honor," said he to himself, "I shall really soon think that I myself am deceived. Is that the same man who, with flaming eyes and threatening voice, pursued me, gun in hand, and absolutely wished to kill me three quarters of an hour since? Then I should have taken him for either a hero or an assassin. Goodness! how the love of hides does transform a man."

While making these observations Maurice experienced a strange feeling of joy and grief, and felt unable to analyze his own emotions. He at length found himself near his beautiful unknown, whom he had so ardently sought. As he had dreamed, she bore a charming name; he was intoxicated with the happiness of finding himself at her side; he drank in her every word; and at each sound of her voice the most secret chords of his heart vibrated; but he was deeply wounded by all he saw.

Geneviève was exactly what he had pictured her; the dream of a stormy night, reality had not destroyed. Here was an elegant woman, of sad demeanor but refined mind, affording another instance of what had so frequently occurred during the latter years preceding this present celebrated year '93. Here was a young woman of distinction compelled, from the ruin into which the nobility was ever falling, deeper and deeper, to ally herself to a commoner engaged in commerce. Dixmer appeared a trusty man. He was incontestably rich, and his manners to Geneviève were those of a man making every endeavor to render a woman happy. But could kindness, riches, or excellent intentions compensate her for what she had sacrificed, or remove the immense distance existing between husband

and wife, between a refined, distinguished, charming girl, and a vulgar-looking tradesman? With what could Geneviève fill up this abyss? Alas! Maurice now guessed too well. With love! And he therefore returned to that opinion of the young woman he had formed on the evening of their first meeting, — that she was returning from some love affair.

The idea of Geneviève loving any one was torture to Maurice. He sighed, and deeply regretted having exposed himself to the temptation of imbibing a still larger dose of that poison termed love. At other moments, while listening to that ductile voice, so soft and harmonious, examining that pure and open countenance which evinced no fear that he should read every secret of her soul, he arrived at the conclusion that it was utterly impossible that this matchless creature could descend to deceit; and then he found a bitter pleasure in remembering that this lovely woman belonged solely to this good citizen, with his honest smile and vulgar pleasantries, and would never be to him more than a passing acquaintance.

They conversed of course on politics. How could it be otherwise at an epoch when politics were mixed up with everything. Political subjects were even painted on the plates, political designs covered the walls, and politics were daily proclaimed in the streets. All at once, one of the guests who had hitherto preserved silence inquired concerning the prisoners of the Temple.

Maurice started, in spite of himself, at the ring of that voice. He recognized the voice of the man who, a strenuous advocate for extreme measures, had first struck him with his dagger, and then advocated his death. Nevertheless, this man, an honest tanner, and head of the manufactory, at least so Dixmer represented him,

soon incited the good humor of Maurice by the expression of ideas the most patriotic, and principles the most revolutionary. The young man, under certain circumstances, was not inimical to these extreme measures, so much in fashion at this period, of which Danton was the apostle and hero. In this man's place, from the effect of whose voice and weapon he felt himself still smarting, he would not have attempted to assassinate the man he believed to be a spy, but would rather have locked him in the garden, and there, equally armed, sword to sword, have fought him without mercy, without pity. This is what Maurice would have done; but he comprehended soon that this was too much to expect of a journeyman-tanner.

This man of extreme measures, who appeared to possess in his political ideas the same violent system as in his private conduct, then spoke of the Temple, and expressed surprise that the prisoners were confided to the guardianship of a permanent council liable to be corrupted, and to municipals whose fidelity had already been more than once tempted.

"Yes," said the Citizen Morand; "but it must be remembered that on every occasion, up to the present time, the municipals have fully justified the confidence reposed in them by the nation, and history will record that the Citizen Robespierre alone has merited the title of 'Incorruptible.'"

"Without doubt, without doubt," replied the interlocutor; "but because a thing has not yet happened, it would be absurd to suppose it never can happen. As for the National Guard," continued the foreman of the manufactory, "well, the companies of the different sections are placed, each in their turn, on duty at the Temple, and that indifferently. Will you not admit that there might

be, in a company of twenty or five-and-twenty men, a band of seven or eight determined characters, who some fine night might slaughter the sentinels and carry off the prisoners?"

"Bah!" said Maurice; "you see, Citizen, this would be a foolish expedient. In fact the thing was tried three weeks or a month ago, and did not succeed."

"Yes," replied Morand; "because one of those aristocrats who composed the patrol had the imprudence in speaking to let fall the word 'Monsieur,' I do not know to whom."

"And then," said Maurice, who wished to prove that the police of the Republic did their duty, "because the entrance of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge into Paris was already known — "

"Bah!" cried Dixmer.

"They knew that Maison-Rouge had entered Paris?" coldly demanded Morand; "and did they know by what means he entered?"

"Perfectly."

"Indeed!" said Morand, leaning forward to look at Maurice, "I should be curious to know that, as up to the present moment no one can speak positively. But you, Citizen, you, secretary of one of the principal sections in Paris, ought to be better informed."

"Doubtless; therefore, what I am about to tell you is the true statement of facts."

All the guests and even Geneviève appeared prepared to pay the greatest attention to this recital.

"Well," said Maurice, "the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge came from Vendée, it appears; he had traversed all France with his usual good fortune. Arrived during the day at the Barrière du Roule, he waited till nine o'clock at night. At that hour a woman, disguised as a

woman of the people, went out through the barrier, carrying to the chevalier a costume of chasseur of the National Guard. Ten minutes afterward she re-entered with him; but the sentinel, who had seen her go out alone, felt rather suspicious when he saw her return with a companion. He gave the alarm to the post; the post turned out, when the two culprits, knowing they were pursued, flung themselves into a hotel where a second door opened into the Champs Elysées.

"It seems that a patrol devoted to the tyrants waited for the chevalier at the corner of the Rue Bar-du-Bec. You are acquainted with the rest."

"Ah, ah!" said Morand; "this is very strange."

"But positively true," said Maurice.

"Yes, it has an air of truth; but the female, do you know what became of her?"

"No; she has disappeared, and they are quite ignorant who she is, or what she is."

The partner of Citizen Dixmer, and Citizen Dixmer himself, appeared to breathe more freely.

Geneviève had listened to the whole of this recital, pale, silent, and immovable.

"But," said Morand, with his usual coolness, "who can say that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge made one of the patrol who gave the alarm at the Temple?"

"A municipal, one of my friends, that day on duty at the Temple. He recognized him."

"He knew him from description?"

"He had seen him before."

"And what sort of man, personally, is this Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"A man of five or six and twenty, short, fair, and of a pleasing countenance, with magnificent eyes and superb teeth."

There was a profound silence.

"Well," said Morand, "if your friend the municipal recognized this pretended Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, why did he not arrest him?"

"In the first place, not knowing of his arrival at Paris, he feared being the dupe of a resemblance; and then my friend, being rather lukewarm, acted as the lukewarm generally act, — gave him the benefit of his doubt, and let him alone."

"You would not have acted thus, Citizen?" said Dixmer, laughing boisterously.

"No," said Maurice; "I confess it, I would rather find myself deceived than allow so dangerous a man as the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge to escape."

"And what would you have done, then, Monsieur?" timidly inquired Geneviève.

"What would I have done, Citizeness?" said Maurice. "Oh, by Jove! I would have made short work of it. I would have had every door in the Temple shut. I would have walked straight up to the patrol, have placed my hand on his collar, and said to him, 'Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, I arrest you as a traitor to the nation;' and my hand once upon his collar, I would not soon release him, I can tell you."

"And what would have happened then?" asked Geneviève.

"It would have happened that he and his accomplices would have been arrested, and that very hour would have been guillotined; that is all."

Geneviève shuddered, and darted on her neighbor a look of affright. But the Citizen Morand did not appear to notice this glance, and phlegmatically emptied his glass.

"The Citizen Lindey is right," said he; "there was

nothing else to do; but, unfortunately, it was not done."

"And," demanded Geneviève, "do you know what has become of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"Bah!" said Dixmer, "in all probability he did not wish to remain longer, and finding his attempt abortive, quitted Paris immediately."

"And perhaps even France," added Morand.

"Not at all, not at all," said Maurice.

"What! has he had the imprudence to remain in Paris?" asked Geneviève.

"He has not stirred."

A movement of general astonishment followed this assertion which Maurice had stated with so much confidence.

"This is only a supposition, Citizen, on your part," said Morand, — "merely a supposition, that is all."

"No; I affirm it as a positive fact."

"Ah!" said Geneviève; "I acknowledge, for my part, I cannot believe it is as you say; it would be such an unpardonable imprudence."

"You are a woman, Citizen; and can comprehend, then, what would outweigh, with a man of such a character as the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, all considerations of personal security?"

"And what can outweigh the dread of losing one's life in a manner so dreadful?"

"Ah, Citizeness!" answered Maurice, "love."

"Love!" repeated Geneviève.

"Certainly. Do you not know, then, that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is enamored of Marie Antoinette?"

Two or three incredulous laughs were faintly heard. Dixmer looked at Maurice as if he sought to penetrate the very depths of his soul. Geneviève felt the tears

suffuse her eyes, and a shuddering she could not conceal from Maurice ran through her frame. The Citizen Morand spilled some wine from his glass, which he was then in the act of putting to his lips. His paleness would have alarmed Maurice, had not all the young man's attention been at the time centred on Geneviève.

"You are moved, Citizeness," murmured Maurice.

"Did you not say I should understand this because I was a woman? Well, we women feel for such devotion even if opposed to our principles."

"And that of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is the height of devotion, as it is said he has never even spoken to the queen."

"Ah! there now, Citizen Lindey," said the man of extreme measures; "it seems to me, permit me to observe, that you are very indulgent to the Chevalier—"

"Monsieur," said Maurice, perhaps intentionally making use of a word which had ceased to be in vogue, "I love all brave and courageous natures, which does not prevent my fighting them when I meet them in the ranks of my enemies. I do not despair of one day encountering the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"And—" said Geneviève.

"If I meet him—well, I shall fight him."

The supper was finished. Geneviève set the example of retiring, by herself rising from table. At this moment the clock struck.

"Midnight!" said Morand, coolly.

"Midnight" exclaimed Maurice,—"midnight already?"

"That exclamation affords me much pleasure," said Dixmer; "it proves you are not wearied, and induces me to hope we may see you again. It is the door of a true patriot which opens to receive you; and, I trust, ere long, you will find it that of a sincere friend."

Maurice bowed, and turning toward Geneviève, —

"Will the Citizeness also permit me to repeat my visit?" demanded he.

"I do more than permit, I request you to do so. Adieu, Citizen," and Geneviève retired.

Maurice took leave of all the guests, particularly saluting Morand, with whom he was much pleased; pressed Dixmer's hand, and went away bewildered, but on the whole more joyful than sad, from the various and unexpected events of the evening.

"Unfortunate encounter, unfortunate encounter!" said the young woman, after Maurice's departure, and then burst into tears in the presence of her husband, who had conducted her to her room.

"Bah!" said Dixmer, "the Citizen Lindey, a known patriot, secretary to a section, admired, worshipped, and highly popular, is, on the contrary, a great acquisition to a poor tanner who has contraband merchandise on his premises."

"Do you think so, *mon ami?*" asked Geneviève, timidly.

"I think it is a warrant of patriotism, a seal of absolution, placed upon our house; and I think, after this evening, that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge himself would be safe at our house."

And Dixmer kissed his wife with an affection more paternal than conjugal, and left her in the little pavilion set apart for her special benefit, passing himself into another part of the building, which he inhabited with the guests we have seen assembled round his table.

CHAPTER X.

SIMON THE SHOEMAKER.

THE month of May had commenced. A bright clear day expanded the lungs tired of inhaling the icy fogs of winter, and the rays of the sun, warm and exhilarating, shone upon the black walls of the Temple. At the wicket of the interior, which separated the tower from the gardens, the soldiers of the post were smoking and laughing. But, notwithstanding the beauty of the day, and the offer made to the prisoners to descend and walk in the garden, the three females refused to do so; as, since the execution of her husband, the queen had obstinately secluded herself in her chamber, not wishing to pass the door of the apartment lately occupied by the king on the second story. When by any chance she took the air, since the fatal occurrence of the 21st of January, she did so on the platform of the tower, where even the battlements were inclosed with shutters.

The National Guards on duty, who knew the three females had received permission to go out, waited in vain all day, expecting them to turn the authority to some account. Toward five o'clock a man descended, and approached the sergeant in command of the post.

"Ah! ah! is that you, Father Tison?" said the sergeant, who appeared to be a right merry fellow.

"Yes, it is I, Citizen; I bring you, on the part of the municipal Maurice Lindey, your friend, who is now up-

stairs, this permission, granted by the Council of the Temple to my daughter, to pay a visit to her mother this evening."

"And you are going out just as your daughter is coming in? Unnatural father!" said the sergeant.

"I am going much against my inclination, Citizen Sergeant. I also hoped to see my poor child, whom I have not seen for two months, and to embrace her this evening. I am going out now. This service, this damned service, compels me to go out. It is necessary I should go to the Commune to make my report. A fiacre is waiting for me at the door, with two gendarmes, and it is exactly the time when my poor Sophie will arrive."

"Unhappy parent!" said the sergeant.

"And, Citizen Sergeant, when my child comes to see her poor mother, who is dying to see her, you will allow her to pass?"

"The order is correct," replied the sergeant, whom the reader has no doubt recognized as our friend Lorin; "so I have nothing to say against it; when your daughter comes, she may pass."

"Thanks, brave Thermopyle! thanks," said Tison; and he went out to make his report to the Commune, murmuring, "My poor wife, how happy she will be!"

"Do you know, Sergeant," said one of the National Guard, seeing Tison depart, and overhearing the last words, — "do you know there is something in these things that makes my blood run cold?"

"What things, Citizen Devaux?" demanded Lorin.

"Why," replied the compassionate National Guard, "to see this man, with his surly face and heart of stone, this pitiless guardian of the queen, go out with his eyes full of tears, partly of joy, partly of grief, thinking that his wife will see his daughter, and he shall not. It does

not do to reflect upon it too much, Sergeant; it is really grievous."

"Doubtless that is why he does not reflect upon it himself, this man who goes out with tears in his eyes, as you term it."

"Upon what should he reflect?"

"That it is three months since this woman he so brutally uses has seen her child. He does not think of her grief, only of his own; that is all. It is true this woman was queen," continued the sergeant, in an ironical tone rather difficult of comprehension; "and one is not obliged to feel the same respect for a queen as for the wife of a journeyman."

"Notwithstanding, all this is very sad," said Devaux.

"Sad, but necessary," said Lorin. "The best way then, is, as you say, not to think of it," and he began to sing —

"Where the branches met
On a rocky stone,
There I found Nicette,
Seated all alone."

Lorin was in the midst of his pastoral ditty, when suddenly a loud noise was heard from the left side of the post, composed of oaths, menaces, and tears.

"What is that?" demanded Devaux.

"It sounded like the voice of a child," said Lorin, listening.

"In fact," said the National Guard, "it is a poor little one they are beating. Truly they ought only to send here those who have no children."

"Will you sing?" said a hoarse and drunken voice.

And the voice sung in example —

"Madame Veto promised
That all our heads should fall —"

"No," said the child, "I will not sing."

"Will you sing?"

And the voice recommenced —

"Madame Veto promised — "

"No! no!" said the child. "No, no, no!"

"Ah! little beggar," said the hoarse voice; and the noise of a lash whirring through the air was distinctly heard. The infant screamed with agony.

"Ah! *sacre bleu!*" said Lorin; "it is that rascally Simon beating the little Capet."

Several of the National Guards shrugged their shoulders. Two or three tried to smile. Devaux rose and went out.

"I said truly," murmured he, "that parents should never enter here."

All at once a low door opened, and the royal child, chased by the whip of his guardian made a flying leap into the court, when something hard struck his leg, and fell on the ground behind him.

He stumbled, and fell upon his knee.

"Bring me my last, little monster, or else —"

The child rose and shook his head, in token of refusal.

"Ah! this is it, is it?" cried the same voice. "Wait, you shall see," and the shoemaker Simon rushed from his hut as a wild beast from its den.

"Hallo! hallo!" cried Lorin, frowning. "Where are you going so fast, Master Simon?"

"To chastise this little wolf's cub," said the shoemaker.

"To chastise him, for what?"

"For what?"

"Yes."

"Because the little beggar will neither sing like a good patriot, nor work like a good citizen."

"Well, what have you to do with that?" demanded Lorin. "Did the nation confide Capet to you that you might teach him to sing?"

"And what business have you to interfere, I should like to know, Citizen Sergeant?" said Simon, astonished.

"I interfere, as it becomes every man of feeling to do. It is unworthy of a man to see a child beaten, and to suffer him to be beaten."

"Bah! the son of a tyrant."

"He is a child; and the child has not participated in the crimes of the father. The child is not culpable, and, consequently, ought not to be punished."

"And I tell you he was placed with me to do what I choose with him. I choose that he shall sing 'Madame Veto,' and sing it he shall."

"Contemptible wretch!" said Lorin. "'Madame Veto' is mother to this child. Would you yourself like your child to be made to sing that you were one of the canaille?"

"Me!" cried Simon. "Vile aristocrat of a sergeant!"

"No names," said Lorin. "I am not Capet; and they shall not make me sing by force."

"I will have you arrested, vile *ci-devant!*"

"You!" said Lorin; "you have me arrested! you had better try to arrest a Thermopyle."

"Good, good; he laughs best who laughs last. And now, Capet, pick up my last, and come and finish your shoe, or by thunder! —"

"And I," said Lorin, turning deadly pale, and advancing a step forward, his hands clinched, and his teeth set, — "I tell you he shall not pick up your last, he shall not make shoes; do you hear, idiot? Oh, yes! you have your big sword there, but I am no more afraid of it than I am of yourself. Just you dare to draw it."

"Ah! *massacre,*" roared Simon, turning pale with rage.

At this moment two women entered the court. One of them held a paper in her hand. She addressed herself to the sentinel.

"Sergeant," cried the sentinel, "it is Tison's daughter, who asks to see her mother."

"Let her pass, since the Council of the Temple permit it," said Lorin, who did not wish to leave for a moment, for fear Simon should avail himself of his absence and again beat the child.

The sentinel allowed the two women to pass; but hardly had they ascended four steps on the dark staircase, when they encountered Maurice Lindey, who was descending into the court. It was almost dark, so that he was unable to distinguish their features. Maurice stopped them.

"Who are you, citizens?" said he; "and what do you want?"

"I am Sophie Tison," said one of the women; "I obtained permission to visit my mother, and have come to see her."

"Yes," said Maurice; "but this permission was for yourself only, Citizeness."

"I brought my friend, that there might be two of us in the midst of the soldiers, at least."

"Very good; but your friend cannot go up."

"As you please, Citizen," said Sophie Tison, pressing the hand of her friend, who, close against the wall, seemed paralyzed with surprise and terror.

"Citizen sentinels," said Maurice, raising his voice and addressing the sentinels who were stationed on every landing, "allow the Citizen Tison to pass, but do not permit her friend to pass; she will remain on the staircase. See that she is treated with all due respect."

"Yes, Citizen," replied the sentinels.

"Go up, then," said Maurice.

The two women then passed on; and Maurice, leaping over the remaining five or six steps, advanced rapidly into the court.

"What is all this?" said he to the National Guard; "and what is the cause of this noise? The cries of a child were heard as far as the prisoners' antechamber."

"It is this," said Simon, who, accustomed to the manners of the municipals, believed, on perceiving Maurice, that he came as an ally; "this traitor, this spy, this *ci-devant*, this aristocrat, prevents me from belaboring Capet," and he shook his fist at Lorin.

"Yes, by Heaven, I did prevent it," said Lorin, drawing his sword; "and if you again call me *ci-devant*, aristocrat, or traitor, I will run my sword through your body."

"A threat!" cried Simon; "guard! guard!"

"I am the guard," said Lorin; "so you had better not call; for if I come to you, I will exterminate you."

"Come here, Citizen Municipal, come here," said Simon, now seriously alarmed at Lorin's threats.

"The sergeant is quite right," said the municipal, to whom he had appealed for assistance; "you are a disgrace to the nation, coward, to beat a child."

"And why did he beat him? Do you know the reason, Maurice? Because the child would not sing 'Madame Veto;' because the child would not insult his mother."

"The miserable wretch!" said Maurice.

"And you also?" said Simon. "Am I surrounded by traitors?"

"You villain!" cried the municipal, seizing Simon by the throat, and tearing the last from his hand; "try to prove that Maurice Lindey is a traitor," and he applied the leather strap vigorously to the shoulders of the shoemaker.

"Thanks, sir," said the child, who regarded this scene with the coolness of a Stoic; "but he will revenge himself upon me."

"Come, Capet, come, my child," said Lorin; "if he beats you again, call for help; I will chastise him, the haugman. And now, little Capet, return to your tower."

"Why do you call me Capet, even you who protect me? You know very well that Capet is not my name."

"Not your name!" said Lorin; "what is your name, then?"

"I am called Louis Charles de Bourbon. Capet is the name of one of my ancestors. I know the history o France; my father taught me."

"And you want to teach a child to mend old shoes, to whom a king has taught the history of France?" cried Lorin; "it beats everything."

"You need not be concerned," said Maurice to the child; "I will make my report."

"And I mine," said Simon; "and among other things I shall say that instead of allowing one woman to enter the tower, you permitted two to pass."

At this moment the two women went out from the keep. Maurice ran after them.

"Well, Citizeness," said he, addressing the one by his side, "have you seen your mother?"

Sophie Tison placed herself immediately between the municipal and her companion.

"Yes, Citizen, thank you," said she.

Maurice had wished to see the young girl's friend, or at least to hear her voice, but she was enveloped in her mantle, and seemed determined not to utter a single word. He also thought that she trembled. This appearance of fear excited his suspicion. He reascended the stairs

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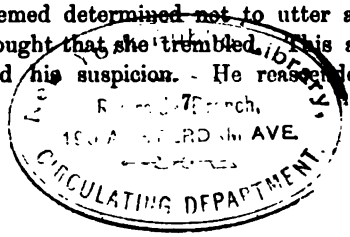

quickly, and through the glass partition saw the queen endeavoring to hide something in her pocket which looked like a billet.

"Ah! ah!" said he, "I have been duped."

He called his colleague.

"Citizen Agricola," said he, "enter Marie Antoinette's room, and do not lose sight of her."

"Heyday!" said the municipal, "is it because —"

"Enter, I tell you, and do not lose sight of her for an instant, a moment, a second."

The municipal entered the queen's apartment.

"Call the woman Tison," said he to one of the National Guard.

Five minutes afterward Tison's wife arrived in high spirits.

"I have seen my daughter," said she.

"Where was that?" demanded Maurice.

"Here, of course, in this antechamber."

"Well; and did not your daughter ask to see the Austrian?"

"No."

"Did she not enter her room?"

"No."

"And during the time you were conversing with your daughter, did no one come out of the prisoners' chamber?"

"How should I know? I was fully occupied with my daughter, whom I had not seen for three months."

"Recollect yourself."

"Ah, yes; I think I remember."

"What?"

"The young girl came out."

"Marie Thérèse?"

"Yes."

"Did she speak to your daughter?"

"No."

"Your daughter gave nothing to her?"

"No."

"Did she pick up nothing from the ground?"

"My daughter?"

"No, the daughter of Marie Antoinette."

"She picked up her pocket-handkerchief."

"Oh, woman! what were you thinking of?" cried Maurice.

And he rushed toward a bell-cord, which he pulled violently. It was an alarm-bell.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE BILLET.

THE other two municipal guards came up hastily. A detachment of the post accompanied them. The doors were shut, and two sentinels intercepted the egress from each chamber.

"What do you want, sir?" said the queen to Maurice when he entered. "I was about to retire, when, five minutes since, the citizen municipal suddenly forced his entrance into my chamber, without informing me what he desired."

"Madame," said Maurice, bowing, "it is not my colleague who desires anything from you, it is myself."

"You, sir?" demanded Marie Antoinette, looking at Maurice, whose courteous behavior had caused her to regard him with some favor; "and what do you desire?"

"I request that you will be kind enough to show me the letter you were concealing when I entered just now."

Madame Royale and Madame Elizabeth trembled. The queen turned very pale.

"You are mistaken, sir; I concealed nothing."

"You lie, Austrian!" cried Agricola.

Maurice quickly placed his hand on the arm of his colleague.

"One moment, my dear colleague," said he; "leave me to speak to the citizeness, I am a little bit of a lawyer."

"Go on then; but do not stand on ceremony with her, *morbleu!*"

"You have concealed a letter, Citizen," said Maurice, austerely; "now it is necessary we should see this letter."

"But what letter?"

"The letter that Tison's daughter brought you, and which the citizeness, your daughter" (Maurice alluded to the young princess), "picked up with her pocket-handkerchief."

The three females looked at each other with terror.

"But, Monsieur, this is worse than tyranny," said the queen; "we are women! women!"

"Do not mistake," said Maurice, with firmness; "we are neither judges nor executioners, we are overseers, — that is to say, your fellow-citizens, — commissioned to guard you. We have our order; to violate it is treason. Citizeness, I pray you to give me the letter you have concealed."

"Gentlemen," said the queen, with much hauteur, "since you are overseers, search, and deprive us of our rest to-night as usual."

"God forbid we should lay our hands upon women! I am now going to inform the Commune, and shall await its orders. But you cannot retire to bed; you may sleep upon these easy-chairs, if you please, and we shall guard you. If necessary, they will search you."

"What is the matter?" said Tison's wife, appearing at the door quite bewildered.

"It is this, Citizeness," said Maurice, "that by lending yourself to treasonable practices, you have debarred yourself from seeing your daughter any more."

"From seeing my daughter? What do you tell me then, Citizen," demanded Tison's wife, who could not yet comprehend why she was not to see her daughter.

"I tell you, that your daughter did not come here to

see you, but to bring a letter to the Citizen Capet; and therefore she shall return here no more."

"But if she does not come here, I shall not be able to see her, as we are forbidden to go out."

"This time you have no one to blame but yourself, — it is your own fault," said Maurice.

"Oh!" screamed the poor woman, "my fault! why do you say it is my fault? Nothing has happened, I assure you. If I thought anything could have happened, woe to you, Antoinette; you should pay dearly for it," and the exasperated woman shook her fist at the queen.

"Threaten no one," said Maurice; "but rather gain by kindness what we demand, for you are a woman, and the Citizeness Marie Antoinette, who is herself a mother, will take pity on you. To-morrow your daughter will be arrested, — to-morrow imprisoned; then, if they discover anything, and you know that when they choose they always can do so, she is lost, and also her companion."

The woman Tison, who had listened to Maurice with increasing terror, turned wildly toward the queen.

"You hear, Antoinette? My daughter! It is you who will ruin my child!"

The queen in her turn appeared bewildered, not by the fury which sparkled in the eyes of her female jailer, but by her evident despair. "Come with me, Madame Tison," said she, "I have something to say to you."

"Holloa! No cajolery; we are not in your way here," said Maurice's colleague. "Before the municipality — everything open and above board."

"Never mind, Citizen Agricola," whispered Maurice, "provided we discover the truth, it does not matter in what fashion we do so."

"You are right, Citizen Maurice; but —"

"Let us pass behind the glazed partition, Citizen Agri-

cola; and if you agree with me, we will turn our backs, and I am certain the individual for whom we evince this consideration will not make us repent it."

The queen heard these words, intended for her to hear, and cast upon the young man a look of grateful acknowledgment. Maurice carelessly turned his head, and walked to the other side of the glazed partition. Agricola followed him.

"You see this queen," said he to Agricola: "as a queen she is very culpable, as a woman she is high-minded and dignified. It is well to destroy crowns; princes are purified by misfortune."

"By thunder! you speak well, Citizen Maurice; I like to hear you talk, and your friend Lorin. Is that poetry you recited?"

Maurice smiled.

During this conversation, the scene which Maurice had anticipated was passing on the other side.

The woman Tison approached the queen.

"Madame," said the queen, "your despair grieves me. I do not wish to deprive you of your daughter, — that would be too cruel; but pray consider, perhaps by doing what these men require, your child will be lost none the less."

"Do what they tell you!" cried the woman, — "do what they tell you!"

"But first, at least, hear what is the matter."

"What is the matter?" demanded the woman, with almost savage curiosity.

"Your daughter brought a friend with her."

"Yes, a work-woman like herself. She did not like to come alone, because of the soldiers."

"This friend committed a letter to your daughter; your daughter let it fall. Marie, who was passing, picked

it up. It is, doubtless, a paper of no consequence, but still one upon which evil-minded people might put a bad construction. Did not the municipal just tell you, when they wish that they can always do so?"

"Well, go on."

"That is all; you wish me to give up this paper, — do you wish me to sacrifice a friend, without perhaps benefiting your daughter?"

"Do what they tell you!" shrieked the woman, — "do what they tell you!"

"But if this paper implicates your daughter," said the queen; "do try to understand."

"My daughter is, like myself, a good patriot," cried the hag. "Thank God, the Tisons are well known. Do what they tell you!"

"Good Heavens!" said the queen; "how can I make you understand?"

"My child, I want them to return me my child," cried Tison's wife, stamping her feet. "Give me the paper, Antoinette, give me the paper!"

"There it is, Madame," and the queen tendered a paper to the wretched creature, which she seized, and held joyfully above her head, crying, —

"Come here, come here, citizen municipals. I have the paper; take it, and give me back my child."

"You sacrifice our friends, sister," said Elizabeth.

"No, sister," replied the queen, mournfully; "I only sacrifice ourselves. The paper implicates no one."

At the cries of the woman Tison, Maurice and his colleague came toward her, when she immediately held out the paper to them. They opened it and read, —

"At L'Orient [the east] a friend still watches."

Maurice had no sooner cast his eyes on this paper

than he started. The hand-writing seemed to him not unknown.

"My God!" cried he, "can it be that of Geneviève? But no, it is impossible; I am mad. It resembles hers, certainly; but what can Geneviève have to do with the queen?"

He turned round, and observed that Marie Antoinette was watching him attentively. As for the woman Tison, as she awaited her fate, she devoured Maurice with her eyes.

"You have done a good action," said he, to Tison's wife; "and you, Citizeness, a great one," addressing the queen.

"Then, sir," replied Marie Antoinette, "follow my example. Burn the paper, and you will perform a charitable one."

"You are joking, Austrian," said Agricola. "Burn a paper that may perhaps enable us to discover a whole covey of aristocrats? Good faith! no; we are not quite such fools as that."

"Ah, yes! do burn it; it might compromise my daughter," implored the woman Tison.

"I believe you; your daughter and some others," said Agricola, taking the paper from the hands of Maurice, which the latter, had he been alone, would most certainly have destroyed.

Ten minutes afterward, the paper was deposited on the bureau of the members of the Commune. It was instantly opened and commented upon in various ways.

"'At L'Orient — a friend watches.' What the devil can that mean?" said one.

"Why," replied a geographer, "at Lorient, that is clear enough. Lorient is a little town of Brittany, situated between Vannes and Quimper. Egad! we ought to

burn the town, if it be true that it shelters aristocrats who are watching still over the Austrian."

"It is all the more dangerous," said another, "because Lorient being a sea-port, they might establish communication with England."

"I propose," said a third, "that we send a committee to Lorient, and that a thorough search of the place be instituted."

This proposition made the minority smile, but was approved by the majority; they accordingly resolved that a committee be sent to Lorient to watch the aristocrats.

Maurice had been informed of the consultation.

"I think it may perhaps mean the East," said he; "but I am quite sure it is not in Brittany."

The next day the queen, who, as we have previously said, would no more enter the garden, to avoid passing the door of the apartment where her husband had been imprisoned, requested permission to ascend the tower to take the air, with her daughter and Madame Elizabeth. Her wish was instantly acceded to; but Maurice followed her, and mounting the stairs, ensconced himself behind a little turret where, concealed, he awaited the result of the letter of the preceding evening. The queen at first walked without manifesting any concern, with Madame Elizabeth and her daughter, then stopped, while the two princesses continued their promenade, and turning toward the "East," observed intently a house at the windows of which several persons were visible, one of whom held a white handkerchief.

Maurice, on his part, drew a telescope from his pocket, and while he adjusted it, the queen made a quick movement, as if to request those at the window to retire; but Maurice had already remarked the head of a man, with fair hair and pale complexion, whose salutation was

so respectful as almost to border on humility. Behind this young man, for he appeared to be five, or six, and twenty years of age, stood a woman partially concealed from his view. Maurice directed his glass toward her, and thinking that he recognized Geneviève, inadvertently made a motion which brought him under the notice of the party. Immediately the female, who also held a telescope in her hand, drew back, dragging the young man away with her. Was it really Geneviève? Had she also recognized Maurice? Had this couple only retired at the signal given them by the queen? Maurice waited a moment to see if the young man and woman would reappear; but seeing the window remain unoccupied, he recommended the strictest vigilance to his colleague, Agricola, quickly descended the staircase, and went and concealed himself at the corner of the Rue Portefoin, to see if they came out of the house. It was in vain; no one appeared. He could not resist the suspicion which had entered his mind from the moment the companion of Tison's daughter had persisted in maintaining so obstinate a silence. Maurice directed his course toward the old Rue Saint Jacques, where he arrived, bewildered by the strangest suspicions, doubts, and fears. When he entered, Geneviève, attired in a white morning-dress, was seated under an arbor of jasmine, where she was accustomed to breakfast. She, as usual, accorded Maurice a friendly greeting, and invited him to take a cup of chocolate with her. Dixmer on his part, who had in the mean time arrived, expressed the greatest joy at meeting Maurice at this unwonted hour; but before he permitted Maurice to take the cup of chocolate he had accepted, always enthusiastically attached to his trade, he insisted that his friend the secretary to the section Lepelletier should come with him and see the manufactory.

On their way to the work-shops Dixmer, taking Maurice's arm and hurrying him along, observed, —

"My dear Maurice, I have important news for you."

"Political?" asked Maurice, always occupied with one idea.

"Ah! dear Citizen," said Dixmer, smiling, "do you think we trouble ourselves about politics? No, no; relating to our business, thank Heaven! My honored friend, Morand, who, as you know, is a celebrated chemist, has discovered the secret of staining morocco red in an unequalled manner, — that is to say, the color remains unalterable, — by a process never discovered till now. It is this color I want to show you. Besides, you will see Morand at work; he is quite an artist."

Maurice did not exactly comprehend how making a red dye constituted an artist; but nevertheless accompanied Dixmer across the tanyards, and in a separate sort of office saw the Citizen Morand at work. He had on his blue spectacles, was in his working-dress, and seemed entirely absorbed in the intensely interesting process of changing a sheep-skin from dirty white to purple. He had tucked up his sleeves, and his hands and arms were red to the elbow. As Dixmer remarked, he had devoted himself heart and soul to cochineal.

So entirely was he preoccupied that he merely moved his head to Maurice.

"Well, Citizen Morand," said Dixmer, "what say we?"

"We shall gain a hundred thousand francs yearly by this process alone; but I have not slept for eight days, and these acids have affected my sight."

Maurice left Dixmer with Morand and joined Geneviève as he said to himself, "It must be confessed the trade of municipal is degrading to the hero! About eight days in the Temple one might fancy one's self an aristocrat

and denounce one's self. Honest Dixmer! Plodding Morand! Gentle Geneviève! And I, idiot that I was, to have suspected them for a moment!"

Geneviève awaited Maurice with a sweet smile calculated most effectually to dispel every vestige of suspicion. She was as usual sweet, amiable, and charming.

The hours passed in Geneviève's society were those only in which Maurice could be said really to exist. At all other times he was infected with that fever which might be termed the fever of '93, by which Paris was separated into two hostile camps, and existence rendered a perpetual combat. Toward noon, however, he had to part with Geneviève, and return to the Tower of the Temple.

At the end of Rue Sainte Avoie he met Lorin, who was bringing down his guard from duty. He left the ranks and came to meet Maurice, who still wore upon his countenance the impress of the happiness he had enjoyed in the society of the lovely Geneviève.

"Ah!" said Lorin, cordially shaking his friend by the hand, —

> "In vain you seek your anguish
> Within your heart to hide,
> I know for whom you languish,
> For whom so long you 've sighed;
> Within your heart, within your eyes,
> Love reigns, and triumphs in his prize."

Maurice put his hand in his pocket in search of his key. This was the method he adopted to put a stop to his friend's poetical vein. But Lorin saw the movement, and ran away, laughing. "Apropos," said he retracing his steps, "you have three days more at the Temple; I recommend poor little Capet to your care."

CHAPTER XII.

LOVE.

In fact Maurice for some time had experienced a strange medley of happiness and misery. It is always thus at the commencement of the tender passion. His daily occupation at the section Lepelletier, his evening visits to the old Rue Saint Jacques, and some occasional visits to the club of the Thermopyles, filled up his days.

He did not deceive himself. He well knew that to see Geneviève daily was to imbibe large draughts of a hopeless love.

Geneviève was a woman of retired manners and pleasing appearance, who would frankly tender her hand to a friend, and would innocently approach his face with her lips, with the confidence of a sister, and the ignorance of a vestal before whom the words of love appear as blasphemy.

Thus in the purest dreams that the first style of Raphael has traced upon the canvas is a Madonna with smiling lips, chaste eyes, and heavenly expression. This creation of the divine pupil of Perugino may help us to portray the likeness of Geneviève.

In the midst of flowers she imbibed their freshness and perfume; isolated from the occupation of her husband, and from her husband himself, she appeared to Maurice each time he saw her like a living enigma, of which he could not divine the meaning, and dared not ask it.

One evening when, as usual, he had remained alone with her, they were both seated at the same window by which he had entered, a few nights since, with so little ceremony; the perfume of the lilacs in full bloom floated upon the soft breeze that had succeeded the radiant sunset. After a long silence, Maurice, having during this silence followed the intelligent and holy eye of Geneviève as she watched the appearance of the stars in the azure vault of heaven, ventured to inquire concerning the great disparity between herself and husband. She so young, and he already past the middle age; she so refined in manner, while everything around announced him a man of inferior birth and education; she so sublime in her thoughts and aspirations, while her husband had not an idea beyond his manufactory.

"Here, at the abode of a master-tanner, are harp, piano, and drawings, which you acknowledge to be your own. How is it that here I meet with aristocracy which though I detest it in others, I adore in you?"

Geneviève fixed upon Maurice a look full of candor.

"Thanks," said she, "for this inquiry; it proves to me that you are a man of delicacy, and that you have not sought information concerning me from any one else."

"Never, Madame," said Maurice. "I have a devoted friend who would die for me; I have a hundred comrades ready to follow wherever I may lead them, — but among all these hearts, when a woman is concerned, and above all, such a woman as Geneviève, I know but one I would trust, and that one is my own."

"Thanks, Maurice," said the young woman, "I will myself tell you, then, all you desire to know."

"Your maiden name first," said Maurice. "I only know your married one at present."

Geneviève detected the selfishness of love in this question, and smiled.

"Genevieve du Treilly," said she.

Maurice repeated, "Geneviève du Treilly!"

"My family," continued Geneviève, "was ruined after the American war, in which both my father and elder brother had taken part."

"Gentlemen both?" said Maurice.

"No, no," said Geneviève, blushing.

"And yet you said your maiden name was Geneviève du Treilly."

"Frankly, Monsieur Maurice, my family was rich, but had no claim to nobility."

"You do not trust me," said the young man, smiling.

"Oh, yes! I do," replied Geneviève. "In America my father was connected with the father of Monsieur Morand. Monsieur Dixmer was managing man to Monsieur Morand. We were ruined, and Monsieur Morand, knowing that Monsieur Dixmer was a man of independent fortune, presented him to my father, who in his turn presented him to me. I saw that my father had beforehand resolved on my marriage. I understood it was the wish of my family. I did not love Monsieur Dixmer, neither had I ever loved any one, but I accepted him.

"I have now been Dixmer's wife for three years, and I am bound to say that he has proved to me so good and excellent a husband, that notwithstanding the difference of taste and the disparity of age you have remarked, I have never even for a moment experienced the slightest feeling of regret."

"But," said Maurice, "when you married Monsieur Dixmer he was not at the head of this manufactory."

"No, we lived at Blois. After the 10th of August

Monsieur Dixmer purchased this house and the adjoining workshops; and that I might not be annoyed by the workmen, and to spare me the sight of many things repulsive to a person of my habits, — which are, as you observed, Maurice, a little aristocratic, — he gave me this pavilion, where I live alone, retired, gratifying my various fancies and desires, and happy when a friend like yourself, Maurice, comes either to distract or partake in my reveries."

And Geneviève tendered her hand to Maurice, which he ardently kissed. Geneviève blushed slightly.

"Now, my friend," said the young woman, drawing away her hand, "you know how I became the wife of Monsieur Dixmer."

"Yes," said Maurice, regarding Geneviève with great attention; "but you have not told me how Monsieur Morand came to be associated with your husband."

"Oh, that is very simple," said Geneviève. "Monsieur Dixmer had, as I have told you, some fortune, but still not sufficient to engage alone in a large concern like this. The son of Monsieur Morand, his protector, as I have already mentioned, — this friend of my father, you will remember, — provided half the funds, and as he possesses a good knowledge of chemistry, he devotes himself to various improvements with the energy you have remarked, and, thanks to which, the business of Monsieur Dixmer, who has charge of all the practical part, has extended immensely."

"Monsieur Morand is also a great friend of yours, is he not, Madame?" said Maurice.

"Monsieur Morand is a noble-hearted being, one of the worthiest men in existence," gravely replied Geneviève.

"If he has given you no other proofs," said Maurice, a little piqued at the importance accorded by Geneviève to the young man, the partner of her husband, "than divid-

ing the expenses of this establishment with Monsieur Dixmer, and inventing a new dye for morocco, allow me to say that you rather over-rate his merits."

"He has given me many other proofs, sir," said Geneviève.

"He is young, is he not?" said Maurice. "His green spectacles render it difficult to tell his age."

"He is thirty-five."

"You have known him then a long time?"

"From infancy."

Maurice bit his lips; he had always suspected Morand loved Geneviève.

"Oh!" said Maurice, "that explains his familiarity with you."

"It seems to me, sir," said Geneviève, smiling, "that this familiarity, which is hardly even that of a friend, does not need any explanation."

"Oh, pardon me, Madame, you know all affectionate natures are jealous, and my friendship was jealous of that you appear to feel for Monsieur Morand."

He ceased talking. Geneviève also remained silent. Nothing further was said that day respecting Morand, and Maurice quitted Geneviève more than ever in love, for he was jealous.

However blinded the young man might be by his passion, whatever turmoil might be in his heart, there were in the recital of Geneviève many gaps, much hesitation, and many concealments, to which at the moment he had paid no attention, but which now returned to his memory and strangely tortured him. The feeling that there was some mystery about the family could not be dispelled even by the liberty allowed him by Dixmer of conversing with Geneviève as often and as long as he pleased, nor by the solitary interview they had together

every evening. Moreover, Maurice had now become a constant and expected guest at the house, where he not only enjoyed unrestrained intercourse with Geneviève, who seemed guarded by her angelic purity from any advances on the part of the young man, but he now escorted her in all the excursions made from time to time in the quarter in which she lived. In the midst of this established intimacy one thing surprised him. The more he sought (perhaps the better to watch his sentiments for Geneviève) the friendship of Morand, by whose genius, notwithstanding his prejudice, he felt himself captivated, and whose pleasing manners won him more and more every day, the greater the inclination evinced by this whimsical man to avoid him. Of this he complained bitterly to Geneviève; for he did not doubt that Morand had discerned in him a rival, and that his conduct proceeded from jealousy.

"The Citizen Morand hates me," said he one day to Geneviève.

"You?" said Geneviève, with a look of astonishment. "You? — Monsieur Morand hates you?"

"Yes; I am sure of it."

"And why should he hate you?"

"Do you wish me to tell you?" cried Maurice.

"Certainly," replied Geneviève.

"Well, then, because I —"

Maurice stopped; he was going to say, "because I love you."

"I cannot tell you why," replied Maurice, coloring. The fierce Republican near Geneviève was as timid and as confused as a young girl.

Geneviève smiled.

"Say," replied she, "there is no sympathy between you, and I may perhaps believe you. You are of a sanguine

temperament, have a brilliant intellect; and you are a man of birth and education, while Morand is a merchant grafted on a chemist. He is timid and retiring. It is this timidity that deters him from taking the first step toward your acquaintance."

"And who asks him to make the first advance toward me? I have made fifty to him, and he has never responded. No," continued Maurice, shaking his head; "that cannot be the reason."

"What is it, then?" said Geneviève.

Maurice chose to remain silent.

The day after this conversation with Geneviève, he visited her at two o'clock in the afternoon, and found her ready dressed to go out. "Welcome," said she, "you will act as my chevalier."

"Where are we going, then?" demanded Maurice.

"I am going to Auteuil. The weather is delightful. I mean to walk part of the way. Our carriage will convey us to the barrier, where it will wait for us. We will then walk to Auteuil, and when I have finished my business there, we will return."

"Oh!" said Maurice, "what a delightful day you offer me!"

The two young people went on their journey. Beyond Passy the carriage put them down, and they continued their journey on foot.

On arriving at Auteuil, Geneviève stopped.

"Wait for me," said she, "at the entrance to the park; when I have finished I will rejoin you."

"Where are you going then?" demanded Maurice.

"To a friend's house."

"Where I cannot accompany you?"

Geneviève smilingly shook her head.

"Impossible!" said she.

Maurice bit his lips.

"Very well," said he; "I will wait."

"Ah! what?" said Geneviève.

"Nothing," replied Maurice. "Shall you be long?"

"If I had thought it would inconvenience you, Maurice, if I had known you were engaged," said Geneviève, "I would not have requested you to do me the slight favor to accompany me to-day. I might have asked —"

"Monsieur Morand," interrupted Maurice, sharply.

"No; you are aware Monsieur Morand is at the manufactory at Rambouillet, and does not return till this evening."

"Oh, it is to that circumstance that I owe the honor?"

"Maurice," said Geneviève, softly, "I cannot keep the person I came to see waiting; but if this puts you to the least inconvenience to return to Paris, only send back the carriage for me."

"No, no, Mademoiselle," replied Maurice, quickly, "I am at your service." He bowed to Geneviève, who, sighing softly, proceeded on her way, and entered Auteuil.

Maurice walked to the appointed place, and commenced walking backward and forward with long impatient strides, cutting off with his cane like Tarquin all the heads of the flowers and thistles, which he found upon the path, like all persons whose thoughts are preoccupied, mechanically and without pausing to trace and retrace his steps.

And what were his thoughts? The desire to know whether Geneviève loved him or not. Her manner to him was that of a mother or sister, but he felt this was no love for a brother. He loved her with an entire love. She had been his constant thought by day, his constantly re-

newed dream by night. At one time, he only asked to see her again; nothing could satisfy him now but her love.

Geneviève was absent for an hour, which to him had appeared an age; he then saw her approaching him with a smile upon her lips. Maurice, on the contrary, went to meet her with a frowning brow.

Geneviève, smiling, took his arm.

"Here I am," said she; "pardon me, *mon ami*, for having made you wait."

Maurice only replied by a bow; and they then entered a shady lane, which, by a winding path, conducted them into the high-road.

It was one of those delicious evenings in spring when every plant sends its fragrance on high, when every bird, either seated on the branches, or skipping from spray to spray, warbles its songs of praise to God; one of those evenings that seem destined to live forever in our memory. Maurice was silent, Geneviève pensive. She fondled with one hand the flowers of a bouquet which she held in the other that rested on the arm of Maurice.

"What is the matter with you?" said he, all at once, to Geneviève; "and what makes you so sad to-day?"

Geneviève might have answered, My happiness. She regarded him tenderly.

"But you," said she, "are you not more than usually sad to-day?"

"I," said Maurice, "have reason to be sad, — I am unhappy; but you —"

"You unhappy?"

"Doubtless; do you not perceive sometimes from my tremulous tones how much I suffer? Does it not often happen, when I am talking with you or your husband, I am compelled suddenly to seek the air, because I feel as if my heart would burst?"

"But," demanded Geneviève, embarrassed, "to what do you attribute this suffering?"

"If I were an affected lady," said Maurice, attempting a laugh, "I should say it was a nervous attack."

"And at this moment do you suffer?"

"Much," said Maurice.

"Let us return, then."

"What, already, Madame?"

"Certainly."

"True," said the young man, "I forgot Monsieur Morand would return from Rambouillet this evening; and it is fast approaching." Geneviève looked at him reproachfully.

"Oh, again!" said she.

"Why then did you, the other day, favor me with so high a eulogium of Monsieur Morand? It is your own fault."

"How long is it since, to people we esteem," demanded Geneviève, "we may not express our real opinion of an estimable man?"

"It must be a very lively esteem to cause you to accelerate your pace, as you at this moment are doing, for fear of being too late by a few minutes."

"You are to-day absolutely unjust, Maurice. Have I not passed part of the day with you?"

"You are right; and I am indeed too exacting," replied Maurice, giving way to his impetuosity. "Let us return to meet Monsieur Morand."

Geneviève felt her displeasure pass from her mind to her heart.

"Yes," said she; "let us return to Monsieur Morand. He at least is a friend who never causes me the slightest pain."

"They are, indeed, valuable friends," said Maurice,

choking with jealousy, "and I, for my part, should like a few such."

They were now upon the high-road; the horizon crimsoned as the departing rays of the setting sun glistened upon the gilt moldings of the dome of the Hôtel des Invalides. A star which on a previous evening had attracted the attention of Geneviève, sparkled in the azure of heaven. Geneviève released Maurice's arm with melancholy resignation.

"Why have you made me suffer?" said she.

"Ah!" said Maurice, "I am not so clever as some people, and do not know how to make myself loved."

"Maurice!" said Geneviève.

"Oh, Madame, if he is always good, always composed, it is because he does not suffer."

Geneviève again placed her white hand on the powerful arm of Maurice.

"I pray you," said she, in an altered tone, "to speak no more; to speak no more!"

"And why?"

"Because your voice makes me ill."

"You are displeased with everything about me, even my voice?"

"Be silent, I conjure you."

"I will obey you, Madame," and the impetuous young man passed his hand over his face, damp with perspiration.

Geneviève saw that he really suffered. People of Maurice's temperament have griefs of their own, little known or understood by the generality of mankind.

"You are my friend, Maurice, a precious friend," said Geneviève, looking at him kindly; "do not deprive me of your valuable friendship."

"Oh, you would not long regret it," said Maurice.

"You are mistaken," said Geneviève, "I should regret it very long, and forever."

"Geneviève! Geneviève!" cried Maurice, "have pity upon me."

Geneviève shuddered. It was the first time Maurice had uttered her name in these passionate accents.

"And now," continued Maurice, "since you have divined me, let me tell you all, Geneviève, for though you should kill me with a look, I have been silent too long; I will speak, Geneviève."

"Sir," said the young woman, "I have supplicated you in the name of our friendship to remain silent; I still pray you to do so, for my sake, if not for your own. Not another word; in the name of Heaven! not another word!"

"Friendship, friendship! if it be a friendship like this you profess for me, that you feel for Monsieur Morand, I wish for no more of your friendship, — I, Geneviève, require more than others."

"Enough," said Madame Dixmer, with the gesture of a queen, — "enough, Monsieur Lindey; here is our carriage, please to conduct me to my husband's house."

Maurice trembled with fever and emotion, when Geneviève, to rejoin the carriage, which indeed was only a few paces distant, placed her hand on his arm.

They both entered the carriage; Geneviève took the front seat, and Maurice the one opposite. They traversed Paris without either one or the other having uttered a word. Only, all the way, Geneviève had held her handkerchief before her eyes. When they entered the building, Dixmer was occupied in his counting-house, Morand had just returned from Rambouillet, and was changing his dress. Geneviève held out her hand to Maurice, as she entered her chamber.

"Adieu! Maurice, you have wished it."

Maurice said nothing, but walked directly to the mantel-piece, where hung a portrait of Geneviève. He ardently kissed it, pressed it to his heart, replaced it, and went out. Maurice reached home without knowing how he arrived there; he had passed through Paris without seeing any thing, without hearing anything; all that had happened to him appeared like a dream; he was unable to account for his actions, his words, or the sentiments which had induced them. There are moments when the most serene spirits succumb under the violence of their own emotions.

It was, as we have said, rather a race than a return, on the part of Maurice. He undressed himself without the assistance of his *valet-de-chambre*, nor did he reply to his cook, who displayed his supper duly prepared for him, but taking the day's letters from the table, he read them all, one after the other, without comprehending a single word. The mists of jealousy, that intoxication of reason, were not yet dissipated. At ten o'clock Maurice mechanically sought his bed, as, indeed, he had done everything else since his parting with Geneviève.

If Maurice in his cooler moments had been told of this extraordinary behavior in another, he would not have been able to comprehend it, but would have considered him mad to have pursued this desperate conduct, totally unauthorized either by too much reserve or too much "abandon" on the part of Geneviève. He now only felt that a terrible blow had been dealt to all his hopes, of which he had never even to himself rendered an account, and upon which, vague as they were, reposed all his visions of happiness, — dreams which like an intangible vapor floated shapelessly toward the horizon, and there disappeared. Thus it happened, as it nearly always does in

such cases, that Maurice, stunned by this blow, dropped asleep directly he found himself in bed, where he remained free from all sentiment till the morrow. He was awakened by the noise of the official opening the door, who came as usual to unclose the windows which looked upon a large garden, and to bring some flowers.

At that time, in the year '93, much attention was paid to the culture of forced flowers, and Maurice dearly loved all flowers; but now without even bestowing a glance upon them, he half raised his heavy head, and supporting it on his hand, endeavored to recall the events of the preceding evening. Maurice asked himself, without being able to account for it, the cause of this mad folly. The sole cause was jealousy of Morand; but the moment was certainly ill-chosen to give vent to his jealousy of a man when this man was at Rambouillet, and while enjoying a *tête-à-tête* with the woman one loves, surrounded by the most enchanting scenery, on one of the lovely days of spring.

It was not suspicion of the inmates at the house at Auteuil, where Geneviève had remained an hour; no, the incessant torment of his life was the idea that Morand loved Geneviève, and yet — singular phantasy of the brain, strange combination of caprice — not a gesture, a look, not even a word from Dixmer's partner had afforded the slightest grounds for this belief.

The voice of the *valet-de-chambre* aroused him from this revery.

"Citizen," said he, showing him the open letters on the table, "have you selected those you wish to keep, or shall they all be burned?"

"Burn what?" said Maurice.

"The letters the Citizen read last night, before he retired to bed."

Maurice could not remember having read one.

"Burn all," said he.

"Here are to-day's letters, Citizen," said the official.

He presented a packet of letters to Maurice, and threw the others in the fire. Maurice took the letters, felt the impression of a seal, and fancied that he recognized the perfume of a friend, and looking over his correspondence he found a sealed envelope and hand-writing that made him tremble. This man, who bravely faced danger, trembled before the odor of a letter. The official approached him to inquire what was the matter, but Maurice signified a wish to be alone.

He turned and returned this letter; he felt a presentiment it contained misery for him, and started and trembled before unknown misfortune.

Having collected all his courage he at length opened it, and read as follows: —

CITIZEN MAURICE, — It has become necessary that we should burst these bonds — bonds which, on your side, affect to exceed the bounds of friendship. You are a man of honor, Citizen, and now that a night has passed since the occurrences of yesterday evening, you ought to comprehend that your presence at our house is no longer desirable. I leave it to you to excuse yourself in any way you think best to my husband. On the arrival this day of any letter from you to Monsieur Dixmer I shall be convinced that I have to regret the loss of a friend who has unfortunately been most imprudent, and whom all social propriety will deter me from meeting for the future. Adieu forever. GENEVIÈVE.

P. S. The bearer awaits your reply.

Maurice called; the *valet-de-chambre* reappeared.

"Who brought this letter?"

"A messenger."

"Is he waiting?"

"Yes."

Maurice did not sigh, did not for a moment hesitate, but, partly dressing, seated himself before his writing-desk, and taking the first sheet of paper that came to hand (he found it had on it the impression of a head with the name of the section), he wrote, —

"CITIZEN DIXMER, — I respected you, and I still do so; but I cannot visit you any longer."

Maurice considered what reason he could assign for not visiting Dixmer, and one idea alone presented itself to his mind, that which at this epoch would have occurred to any one. He thus continued, —

"Certain rumors are afloat relative to your lukewarmness in public affairs. I have no wish to accuse you, and no mission to defend you. Receive my respects, and feel assured your secrets will remain forever buried in my heart."

Maurice did not even revise this letter, written, as we have said, under the impression of the first idea that presented itself. He did not doubt the effect it would produce. Dixmer, an excellent patriot, as Maurice imagined from his conversation at least, would be much grieved at receiving it, his wife and Monsieur Morand would no doubt influence him not to reply, and forgetfulness would gradually spread itself like a dark veil over the happy past, transforming it into a dark and melancholy future. Maurice signed and sealed his letter, gave it to the official, and the messenger departed.

Then a heart-felt sigh escaped the Republican; he took his hat and gloves and proceeded to the section.

He hoped, poor Brutus, to recover his stoicism by occupying himself with public affairs.

Public affairs were indeed terrible; the 31st of May was preparing. The "Terreur," which, like a torrent, pre-

cipitated itself from the height of the Montagne, endeavored to carry away the dike opposed to it by the Girondins, those audacious "Modéréts" who had dared to demand vengeance for the massacres of September, and to wrestle for an instant to save the life of the king.

While Maurice was working with an energy that drove the fever from his heart to his head, the messenger had re-entered the old Rue Saint Jacques, filling the dwelling there with terror and astonishment.

The letter, after passing through Geneviève's hands, was given by her to Dixmer.

Dixmer opened and read it, without at first understanding it; he then communicated the contents to the Citizen Morand, who, becoming as pale as death, supported his head upon his hand.

In the situation in which Dixmer, Morand, and their companions found themselves (a situation totally unknown to Maurice, but which our readers have penetrated) this letter was like a thunderbolt.

"Is this an upright, honest man?" asked Dixmer, in great distress.

"Yes," replied Morand, without the least hesitation.

"Never mind," said the advocate for extreme measures, "you see we were very wrong not to kill him."

"My friend," said Morand, "we struggle against violence, we brand it with the name of crime. We have acted rightly, whatever may be the result, in not assassinating this man. I repeat, I believe Maurice to possess a noble, generous spirit."

"Yes; but if so noble and generous a spirit belongs to this warm Republican, perhaps he may regard it in the light of a crime, if he has made any discovery, not to immolate his own honor, as they say, 'on the altar of his country.'"

"But," said Morand, "do you think he knows anything?"

"Do you not understand? He speaks of secrets buried in his heart.

"These secrets are evidently those confided to him by me relative to our contraband transactions. He knows no others."

"But," said Morand, "this interview at Auteuil? does he suspect anything? You know he accompanied your wife?"

"It was I who told Geneviève to take Maurice with her as a protector."

"Listen," said Morand, "we shall soon see if these surmises be true. The turn of our battalion to guard the Temple happens on the 2d of June, — that is to say in eight days. You are captain, Dixmer, and I lieutenant; if our battalion or even our company receives a counter-order, like that received the other day by the battalion of Buttes-des-Moulins, which Santerre has replaced by that of Gravilliers, all is discovered, and we have only to flee from Paris, or die fighting. But if all follows in the usual course of things —"

"We are lost all the same," replied Dixmer.

"How so?"

"*Pardieu!* does not all revolve upon the co-operation of this young municipal? Was it not he who, without knowing it, was to open the road for us to the queen?"

"That is true!" said Morand, confounded.

"You see, then," said Dixmer, knitting his brows, "that at any price we must renew our intimacy with this young man."

"But if he refuse, if he fear to compromise himself?"

"Listen!" said Dixmer, "I will question Geneviève; she saw him last, perhaps she may know something more."

"Dixmer," said Morand, "it is with pain I see you mixing Geneviève with all our plots; not that I fear any indiscretion on her part. O great God! the drama we are acting is a dreadful one, and I at once blush and tremble to place the head of a woman at stake."

"The head of a woman," said Dixmer, "weighs as heavily as that of a man, where stratagem, candor, and beauty can do as much and sometimes even more than force, strength, power, or courage. Geneviève shares in our convictions and our sympathies. Geneviève shall also share our fate."

"Well, my friend," said Morand, "I have said all I ought to say. Geneviève is in every way worthy of the mission you have given her, or rather, that she has taken upon herself. It is saints who become martyrs."

And he held out his delicate and effeminate hand to Dixmer, who roughly pressed it between his own. Then Dixmer, recommending Morand and his companions to watch with increased vigilance, quitted them, and entered Geneviève's apartments.

She was seated before a table, bending over a piece of embroidery. She turned round at the noise of the opening door, and recognized Dixmer.

"Ah! is it you, *mon ami?*" said she.

"Yes," said Dixmer, with a placid, smiling countenance. "I have received a letter from our friend Maurice, which I cannot understand in the least. Read it, and tell me what you think of it."

Geneviève took the letter with a hand of which (with all her self-command) she could not disguise the tremor, and read. Dixmer followed her eyes as they ran over every line.

"Well?" said he, when she had finished.

"Well! I think that Monsieur Maurice Lindey is an

honest man, and from him we have nothing to fear," replied Geneviève, with the greatest calmness.

"You think he is ignorant who the persons are you visited at Auteuil?"

"I am certain that he is."

"Why then this sudden determination? Did he appear yesterday less friendly or more excited than usual?"

"No," said Geneviève; "I believe he was just the same."

"Consider well what you tell me, Geneviève, for you must understand your reply will greatly influence our future projects."

"Wait, then," said she, with an emotion that overthrew all her attempt at calmness. "Wait —"

"Well!" said Dixmer, all the muscles of his face slightly contracting; "collect your thoughts, Geneviève."

"Yes!" said the young woman, "yes, I remember, yesterday he was not particularly civil. Monsieur Maurice," continued she, "is a little tyrannical in his friendship, and," hesitatingly added, "sometimes we have quarrelled for whole weeks."

"This is then merely a quarrel?" demanded Dixmer.

"Most probably."

"Geneviève, understand this: in our position it is not probability that will suffice, it is certitude we require."

"Ah, well, dear, I am certain."

"This letter, then, can be only a pretext for not visiting us again?"

"*Mon ami*, how can you wish that I should speak to you about such things?"

"Speak, Geneviève, speak; of any other woman I would not ask it."

"It is a pretext," said Geneviève, looking down

"Ah!" said Dixmer. Then after a moment's silence, placing upon his wife's chair the hand with which he had been striving to compress the beatings of his heart, —

"Will you do me a service?" said he.

"What service?" said Geneviève, turning around surprised.

"To prevent even the shadow of danger. Maurice is, perhaps, deeper in our secrets than we imagine. That which you believe a pretext may, perhaps, be a reality. Write him a line."

"I!" said Geneviève, starting.

"Yes, you. Tell him that you have opened the letter and desire an explanation. He will then call, you can interrogate him, and will easily discover what is the matter."

"Oh, no!" cried Geneviève, "I cannot do as you wish me; I will not do it."

"Dear Geneviève, when interests so powerful as those that rest upon us are at stake, will you recoil before any paltry consideration of self-love?"

"I have told you my opinion of Maurice, Monsieur," said Geneviève, "he is honest and brave, but capricious; and I do not choose to submit to any authority but that of my husband."

This answer, returned with so much calmness, and at the same time firmness, convinced Dixmer that to insist further at this moment would be worse than useless. He did not add another word, but looked at Geneviève without seeming to do so, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and went out.

Morand was awaiting his return with great anxiety. Dixmer repeated word for word all that had been said.

"Well!" said Morand, "we will wait, and think no more about it; rather than I would cast a shadow of care

on your wife, rather than wound her self-love, I would renounce —"

Dixmer placed his hand upon his shoulder.

"You are mad, sir," said he, looking at him steadily, "or else you do not know what you are saying."

"What! Dixmer, do you think —"

"I think, Chevalier, that you have no more self-command than I have, to give utterance to sentiments on the impulse of the moment. Neither you, I, nor Geneviève belong to ourselves, Morand. We are the chosen defenders of a certain cause, and this cause depends upon its supporters."

Morand trembled, and preserved a gloomy and thoughtful silence. They took several turns round the garden without exchanging a word. Then Dixmer left Morand.

"I have some orders to give," said he, in a calm voice. "I must leave you, Monsieur Morand."

Morand held out his hand to Dixmer, and looked after him as he turned away.

"Poor Dixmer," said he, "I fear much that in all this you risk the most."

Dixmer returned to the manufactory, and having issued several orders, looked over the day-book, and distributed bread and fuel to the poor of the section, went home, and changed his working dress for his walking costume immediately on his arrival there.

An hour afterward Maurice Lindey, while deeply engaged in his readings and allocutions, was interrupted by the voice of his official, whispering in his ear, —

"Citizen Lindey, some one who, so he pretends at least, has something of importance to say to you, is waiting at your house."

Maurice, on entering, was much surprised at meeting the master-tanner, who had there comfortably installed

himself, and was turning over the newspapers. All the way along he had questioned the domestic, who, of course, not knowing Dixmer, could afford him no clew to his identity.

On perceiving Dixmer, Maurice stopped at the threshold of the door, and blushed in spite of himself.

Dixmer smilingly arose, and held out his hand.

"What ails you? and what have you written to me?" he inquired of the young man. "Indeed, my dear Maurice, I feel it sensibly. You designate me as 'lukewarm and a false patriot.' Now as you dare not repeat these accusations to my face, acknowledge you wish to seek a quarrel with me."

"I will avow anything you please, my dear Dixmer, for your conduct to me has always been that of a worthy man; but I have nevertheless made a resolution, and that resolution is irrevocable."

"But how is that?" said Dixmer, "when according to your own confession you have nothing to reproach us with, and yet, notwithstanding, you leave us?"

"My dear Dixmer, believe me, acting as I now am, and depriving myself of such a friend, I must be actuated by powerful motives."

"Yes; but under any circumstances," said Dixmer, affecting to smile, "these reasons are not those you have written. What you have written to me is merely a subterfuge."

Maurice reflected an instant.

"Listen, Dixmer," said he; "we live in an epoch when a doubt conveyed in a letter can and must annoy you; this I can well understand. It would then be acting like a dishonorable man to allow you to remain in this state of inquietude. Yes, Dixmer, the reasons I gave you were not the true ones."

This avowal, which should have cleared the face of the merchant, only seemed the more to cloud it.

"But at least tell me the true motive," said Dixmer.

"I cannot tell you," said Maurice; "and yet I am certain if you knew it, you would afford me your approval."

Dixmer still continued to press him.

"Then you really wish to know it," said Maurice.

"Yes," replied Dixmer.

"Well, then," replied Maurice, who felt a sensation of relief as he approached the truth; "this is the truth. You have a young and beautiful wife, who is as virtuous as she is beautiful; yet Madame Dixmer's well-known character cannot prevent my frequent visits to your house from being misinterpreted."

Dixmer turned rather pale.

"Indeed!" said he. "Then, my dear Maurice, the husband should thank you for the wrong you do the friend?"

"Understand," said Maurice, "I have not the folly to suppose my presence can be dangerous to your repose, or that of your wife; but it might, perhaps, afford subject for calumny, and you are aware the more absurd the scandal, the easier it gains belief."

"Absurd!" said Dixmer, shrugging his shoulders.

"Absurd, as much as you please," said Maurice, "but separate, we shall not the less be good friends, for we shall have nothing to reproach ourselves with; while, on the contrary, if near —"

"Well! What then?"

"There would be food for scandal."

"Do you think, Maurice, that I should believe —"

"Oh, let us say no more," said the young man.

"But why did you write this instead of telling it to me, Maurice?"

"Just to avoid the scene of this moment."

"And are you vexed, Maurice, that I respected you sufficiently to demand an explanation?"

"No; on the contrary, I swear I am glad to have seen you once again before our final separation."

"Our final separation, Citizen! you whom we esteem so much!" taking Maurice's hand and pressing it between his own.

Maurice started.

"Morand," continued Dixmer, who failed not to notice this start, "Morand said to me again and again this morning, 'Do all in your power to bring back Maurice.'"

"Monsieur," said the young man, frowning and drawing away his hand, "I did not believe I stood very high in the estimation of Monsieur Morand."

"Do you doubt it?" said Dixmer.

"I!" replied Maurice, "I neither believe nor doubt it, and have no motive to inquire on the subject. When I went to your house it was to visit yourself and your wife, and not on account of Monsieur Morand."

"You do not know him, Maurice," said Dixmer; "Morand possesses a noble soul."

"I grant it," said Maurice, smiling bitterly.

"Let us, however, return to the object of my visit," continued Dixmer.

Maurice bowed, like a man who hears all, but has nothing more to say.

"You say, then, that these reports have already circulated?"

"Yes, Citizen."

"Well, then, let us speak frankly. Why should you pay any attention to the silly prattling of idle neighbors? Have you not your own clear conscience, Maurice; and Geneviève, has she not her sense of honor?"

"I am younger than you," said Maurice, who began to be astonished at this pertinacity, "and perhaps view things with more susceptibility. This is why I declare that on the reputation of such a woman as Geneviève a shadow even should not be permitted to be cast. Permit me, therefore, my dear Dixmer, to adhere to my former resolution."

"And now," said Dixmer, "since we are in order for confession, tell me one thing more."

"What!" said Maurice, coloring, "what more do you wish me to avow?"

"That it is neither politics, nor the report of your assiduity at my house, that induces you to leave us."

"What is it, then?"

"The secret you have discovered."

"What secret?" demanded Maurice, with so *naïve* an expression of curiosity, as completely to reassure the tanner.

"The secret of the smuggling affair, which you discovered the same evening when our acquaintance commenced in so strange a manner. You have never forgiven me this fraud, and accuse me of being a bad Republican because I employ English products in my manufactory."

"My dear Dixmer, I solemnly declare to you that when I visited at your house, I had totally forgotten I was in the house of a smuggler."

"Truly?"

"Truly."

"You really, then, had no other reason for abandoning the house than that you have stated?"

"Upon my honor."

"Well," said Dixmer, rising and taking the young man's hand, "I hope you will re-consider this resolution

which has been productive of pain to us all, and will again return to us as usual."

Maurice bowed, but made no reply, which was of course equivalent to a refusal. Dixmer left, annoyed at not having been able to re-establish an intimacy with this man whom certain circumstances had rendered not only useful to him but almost indispensable. Maurice was agitated by a variety of emotions of a contrary nature. Dixmer entreated him to return. Geneviève would pardon him. Why then should he despond? Lorin in his place would have selected a crowd of aphorisms from his favorite authors. But then he had Geneviève's letter, that formal dismissal, which he had carried with him to the section and placed near his heart; also the little word received from her the day after he had rescued her from the cowards who insulted her; and lastly, the obstinate jealousy entertained by the young man against the detestable Morand, the first cause of his rupture with Geneviève.

Maurice remained inflexible in his resolution. But it must be acknowledged the privation of his daily visits to the old Rue Saint Jacques formed a sad blank in his existence; and when the hour arrived at which he had been accustomed to pay his daily visit to the quarter Saint Victor, he fell into a profound fit of melancholy, and began, from that moment, to experience every aspect of hope and regret.

Each morning on awakening he expected to receive a letter from Dixmer, and acknowledged to himself that he who had so firmly resisted all personal persuasion, would now at last yield to a letter; each day he sallied out in hopes of meeting Geneviève, and, beforehand, had arranged a thousand means of accosting her; each evening he returned home in hopes of there finding that messenger

who had one morning unwittingly brought him the grief which had now become his constant companion.

Often, in his hours of despair, his strong nature rebelled at the idea of enduring so much torture, without retaliating upon the primary cause of all his suffering and all his misery, Morand. Then he formed a project to go and seek some quarrel with Morand; but Dixmer's partner was so inoffensive and gentlemanly that to insult or provoke him would be a cowardly proceeding on the part of a Colossus like Maurice.

It was fortunate that Lorin came to distract the attention of Maurice from troubles which he obstinately concealed from his friend, though he did not deny to him their existence. Lorin had used every argument of theory and practice to secure to its country that heart overwhelmed in grief by another love. But although the political situation was grave, and although in another state of mind it might have dragged Maurice into the centre of the whirlpool, it could not restore to the young Republican that first activity which had distinguished him as a hero on the 14th of July and the 10th of August.

In fact, two systems, for the last ten months in view of each other, which thus far had only made some light attacks on each other, and had engaged in a few skirmishes as a prelude, now prepared to meet body to body, and it was evident that the struggle once begun would end fatally for one or the other. These two systems, born in the bosom of the Revolution itself, were those of Moderation, represented by the Girondins, — that is to say, by Brissot, Pétion, Vergniaud, Valazé, Lanjuinais, Barbaroux, etc., — and the Terror, or the Mountain, represented by Danton, Robespierre, Chénier, Fabre, Marat, Collot d'Herbois, Hébert, etc.

After the 10th of August, as after every action, the power appeared to pass into the hands of the Moderates. A ministry had been formed from the wreck of the former ministry, and of a new coalition. Roland, Servien, and Clavières, former ministers, had been recalled; Danton, Monge, and Le Brun had been nominated afresh. With one exception only, all these ministers belonged to the Moderate party. Of course when we say "Moderate" we speak relatively.

But the 10th of August had had its echo from afar, and the coalition hastened to march, not to the assistance of Louis XVI. personally, but of the royalist principle tottering at its basis. Then were heard the menacing words of Brunswick, and as a terrible realization, Longwy and Verdun had fallen into the power of the enemy. Then the Terrorist reaction had taken place; then Danton had dreams of the days of September, and had realized the bloody dream which displayed to the enemy all France as a scene of wholesale assassination, and ready to struggle for her precarious existence with all the energy of despair. September had saved France, but in saving her had rendered her lawless. France saved, and the Energetic party having become powerless, the Moderates regained some strength, and wished to recriminate those dreadful days. The words "murderer" and "assassin" had been uttered; a new name had even been added to the national vocabulary, — it was that of "Septembriseur."

Danton had bravely accepted it. Like Clovis he had for a moment inclined his head under the baptism of blood, only to raise it still more lofty and menacing. Another opportunity to renew the Terror presented itself; it was the process of the king. Violence and moderation entered, not altogether to wrestle against persons but principles. The trial of relative strength was made on

the royal prisoner. Moderation was overcome, and the head of Louis XVI. fell upon the scaffold.

As the 10th of August, so the 21st of January had restored to the coalition all its energy. It was still the same man who opposed them, but not the same fortune. Dumouriez, arrested in his progress by the disorder of all the administrations, which prevented the succor of men or money from reaching him, declared against the Jacobins, whom he accused of causing this disorganization, adopted the party of the Girondins, and ruined them in declaring himself their friend.

Then the Vendée arose; the departments threatened; misfortune producing treason, and treason misfortune. The Jacobins accused the Moderates, and wished to strike their death-blow on the 10th of March, — that is to say, on the eventful evening when our story commenced. But too much precipitation on the part of their adversaries saved them, and perhaps also the rain which caused Pétion (that profound anatomist of the Parisian mind) to remark, —

"It rains! there will be nothing to-night."

But since the 10th of March everything threatened ruin to the Girondins. Marat was accused and acquitted. Robespierre and Danton were reconciled, at least as a lion and tiger are reconciled before killing the bull they both intend to devour; Henriot, the Septembriseur, nominated Commandant-General to the National Guard; everything presaged that awful day which would carry away by storm the last obstacle the Revolution opposed to the Terror.

Such were the great events in which under any other circumstances Maurice would have taken that active part for which his powerful nature and exalted patriotism so fully qualified him. But happily, or unhappily, for Mau-

rice, neither the exhortations of Lorin, nor the terrible demonstrations on the streets, had been able to divert his mind from the one idea that possessed it; and when the 31st of May arrived, the fierce assailant of the Bastille and the Tuileries was laid upon his bed, devoured by that fever which destroys the strongest, and which nevertheless a word can dissipate, a look can heal.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE THIRTY-FIRST OF MAY.

During the morning of the 31st of May, when the tocsin and beat of drum had been sounding since the break of day, the battalion of the Faubourg Saint Victor entered the Temple.

When all the usual formalities had been gone through, and the posts distributed, the municipals on service arrived, bringing with them four pieces of cannon in addition to those already forming the battery at the gate of the Temple.

At the same time Santerre arrived, with his epaulets of yellow wool, and a coat on which his patriotism was displayed by large spots of grease. He reviewed the battalion, which was in a proper state, but on counting the municipals, found only three.

"Why are there only three municipals?" inquired he; "and who is the bad citizen who fails us?"

"The absent citizen, General, is not lukewarm," replied our old acquaintance, Agricola; "for it is the secretary of the section Lepelletier, the chief of the brave Thermopyles, the Citizen Maurice Lindey."

"Well, well," said Santerre, "I know as well as yourself the patriotism of the Citizen Maurice Lindey; but that will not deter me, if he is not here in five minutes, from inscribing his name in the list of the absent."

And Santerre passed on to other details.

A few paces from the general, at the moment he pronounced these words, a captain of chasseurs and a soldier had stationed themselves, one leaning against his gun, the other seated on a cannon.

"Did you hear?" said the captain to the soldier, in a low tone. "Maurice has not yet arrived."

"Yes; but rest assured he will arrive, unless there should be a riot."

"In case he should not come," said the captain, "I will place you sentinel on the staircase; and as she will probable ascend to the tower, you will be able to speak a word to her."

At this moment a man, evidently a municipal from his tricolored scarf, entered; but this man being a stranger to the captain and the chasseur, they both regarded him attentively.

"Citizen General," said the new-comer, addressing Santerre; "I request you to accept me in place of Citizen Maurice Lindey, who is ill. Here is the medical certificate; in eight days it will be my turn to mount guard. I now exchange with him; in eight days he will do duty for me, as to-day I will for him."

"Provided the Capets and Capettes live eight days longer," said one of the municipals.

Santerre replied by a slight smile to this pleasantry, and turning toward Maurice's proxy, —

"Very good," said he; "sign the register, in lieu of Maurice Lindey, and state in the column of observations the reason for this exchange."

The captain and chasseur exchanged looks of delight, mingled with astonishment.

"In eight days," said they.

"Captain Dixmer," cried Santerre, "take your position in the garden with your company."

"Come, Morand," said the captain to the chasseur his companion.

The drum sounded, and the company led by the master-tanner filed off in the direction prescribed. They piled arms, and the company divided into groups, which, according to their inclination, walked to and fro.

Their place of promenade was the same garden where, in the time of Louis XVI., the royal family came sometimes to take the air. This garden was naked, barren, and desolate, completely despoiled of trees, flowers, or verdure of any kind.

At about five-and-twenty paces, or perhaps rather nearer that portion of the wall built on the Rue Portefoin, was a species of cottage, which the foresight of the municipality had established for the convenience of the National Guard stationed at the Temple, who in days of riot, when they were not permitted to go out of the grounds, found it an accommodation to take their meals in this little cottage. The direction of this little alehouse had been a matter of contention, till at length concession was made in favor of an excellent patriot, the wife of a suburban killed on the 10th of August, who bore the name of Plumeau.

This little cabin, built of planks and mud, rose in the middle of a flower-bed, of which the bounds may still be recognized by a hedge of dwarf box-trees. It was composed of a single chamber, twelve feet square, under which extended a cave, the descent to which was by steps rudely cut in the earth itself. Here the Widow Plumeau stowed away her wine and provisions. This department was alternately managed by herself and daughter, a girl of twelve or fifteen years of age.

Hardly established at their bivouac, the National Guards separated, as we have said, some to saunter in

the garden, while others chatted with the hostess. Some amused themselves by criticising the designs traced upon the walls, which were all meant to be of a patriotic character, — such as the king pendent with this inscription, "Monsieur Veto taking an air-bath;" or the king guillotined with this, "Monsieur Veto spitting in the sack;" while others were giving gastronomical orders to Madame Plumeau, according to the suggestions of their different appetites. Among the latter were the captain and the chasseur whom we have previously remarked.

"Ah, Captain Dixmer!" said the *cantinière*, "I have some famous Saumur wine."

"But, Citizeness Plumeau, in my opinion, at least, the Saumur wine is nothing without Brie cheese," replied the captain, who, before he stated this opinion, had carefully looked round, and detected the absence of his favorite viand.

"Ah! Captain, it is true; but the last morsel has been consumed."

"Well," said the captain, "no Brie cheese, no Saumur wine for me; and remark, Citizeness Plumeau, my order would have been of some amount, as I had intended to treat all my company."

"But, Captain, I ask you to wait only five minutes, and I will run and procure some at the house of the citizen concierge who competes with me, and who always has it. I shall pay very dear, and you, I am sure, are too good a patriot not to compensate me."

"Yes, yes," replied Dixmer; "and in the mean time we will go down into the vault, and select our own wines."

"Make yourself at home, Captain, pray do."

And the Widow Plumeau ran with all her might toward the lodge of the concierge, while the captain and

chasseur, provided with a light, raised the trap-door, and descended into the cave.

"Good," said Morand, after an instant's inspection, "the cave extends in the direction of Rue Portefoin. It is nine or ten feet in depth, and there is no brickwork."

"What is the nature of the soil?" inquired Dixmer.

"Chalk; it is all made earth. These gardens have been turned over many times. There is nowhere any rock."

"Be quick," cried Dixmer, "I hear the clogs of our *vivandière;* take two bottles of wine and let us go up."

They both appeared at the trap-door as Madame Plumeau entered, carrying the cheese so strenuously insisted upon by Dixmer, while several chasseurs followed her, attracted by the favorable appearance of the said cheese.

Dixmer did the honors; he offered twenty bottles of wine to his company, while the Citizen Morand recounted the devotion of Curtius, the disinterestedness of Fabricius, and the patriotism of Brutus and Cassius, — histories almost as much appreciated as the Brie cheese and the Anjou wine offered by Dixmer, which is not saying a little.

Eleven o'olock struck. At half-past, the sentinels were relieved.

"Does not the Austrian generally take her walk from twelve to one?" asked Dixmer of Tison, who passed the cabin.

"From twelve to one, exactly," and he began to sing.

His song was received with a shout of laughter from the National Guard. Dixmer immediately summoned those men in his company whose duty it was to mount guard from half-past eleven o'clock till half-past one, told

them to hasten their breakfast, and made Morand take arms, in order to place him, as had been agreed, on the highest story of the tower, in the same turret behind which Maurice was hidden the day he had intercepted the signs intended for the queen from the window on Rue Portefoin. If any one had noticed Morand at the moment he received this order, simple and expected as it was, he would have seen him grow pale beneath the masses of his long black hair.

Suddenly a dull noise shook the courts of the Temple, and sounds were heard in the distance like the roaring of a hurricane.

"What is that?" asked Dixmer of Tison.

"Oh!" replied the jailer, "it is nothing; some little uproar these rascally Brissotins are making before they go to the guillotine."

The noise became more and more threatening, the roar of artillery was heard, and a crowd of people rushed past, near the Temple, shouting, —

"Long live the Sections!" "Long live Henriot!" "Down with the Brissotins!" "Down with the Rolandists!" "Down with Madame Veto!"

"Good!" said Tison, clapping his hands, "I will go and open the door for Madame Veto, that without any disturbance she may enjoy the love the people evince for her."

He approached the wicket of the turret-keep.

"Holloa, Tison!" cried a formidable voice.

"Yes, General," replied he, stopping short.

"No egress to-day," said Santerre; "the prisoners are not to quit their chambers."

The order was peremptory.

"Good!" said Tison, "so much the less trouble."

Dixmer and Morand exchanged looks of disappointment;

then waiting till the hour for duty had struck (though nothing could now be attempted), they both went to walk between the cabin and the wall running toward Rue Portefoin. Morand began to measure the distance, taking geometrical steps, — that is to say of three feet.

"What is the distance?" inquired Dixmer.

"Sixty to sixty-one feet," replied Morand.

"How many days will be required?"

Morand considered, then traced on the ground with a stick some geometrical signs, which he immediately effaced.

"Seven days at least," said he.

"Maurice will be on guard in eight days," murmured Dixmer. "It is, then, absolutely imperative that within eight days we should be reconciled to Maurice."

The half-hour struck; Morand, sighing, resumed his musket, and conducted by the corporal, went to relieve the sentinel who was patrolling the platform before the tower.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEVOTION.

THE day following these events, — that is to say the 1st of June, — at ten o'clock in the morning, Geneviève was seated in her accustomed place near the window. She asked herself why, for the last three weeks, the days for her rose so sad; why they passed so slowly; and lastly, why instead of waiting for the evening with impatience, she now dreaded its return.

Her nights above all were wretched, — those nights that used to be so happy; those nights passed in dreaming of the past and of the future.

At this moment her eyes fell upon a case of magnificent striped and crimson carnations, which since the winter she had removed from the little greenhouse where Maurice had been imprisoned, to bloom in her own apartment.

Maurice had taught her to cultivate them in the mahogany bed in which they were inclosed; she had watered and trimmed them herself so long as Maurice had been there, for when he came in the evening she delighted to show him the progress, thanks to their united care, that the flowers had made during the night.

But since the cessation of Maurice's visits the poor carnations had been quite neglected, and for want of requisite care and attention the opening buds had withered, turned yellow, and fallen down outside the balustrade.

Geneviève comprehended, from this sight alone, the reason of her own melancholy. She said to herself, "It is with flowers as with certain friendships which we nourish and cultivate with ardor till they bloom in the heart, and then, in a moment, a suspicion, a caprice, an unkindness strikes at the root of this friendship, and the heart that it had revived again contracts, languishes, and dies." The young woman experienced a sensation of anguish. She examined her inmost thoughts; the sentiments she had endeavored to combat, and which she had hoped to conquer, she feared now more than ever would only die with her; then she felt a moment's despair, for she knew the struggle would become more and more impossible. She meekly bowed her head, imprinted a kiss upon the withered flowers, and wept.

Her husband entered at this moment. He, on his side, was too much preoccupied with his own thoughts to notice the trying ordeal through which his young wife was passing, nor did he pay the least attention to the tell-tale redness of her eyelids.

It is true Geneviève rose quickly to meet him, and in so doing turned her face from the window, standing in the dim light.

"Well?" said she.

"Well, nothing new; impossible to approach her, impossible to convey any message to her, impossible even to see her."

"What!" cried Geneviève, "with all the noise there has been in Paris?"

"It is this very uproar which has made the guard redouble their vigilance, from the fear that some might avail themselves of the general excitement to make an attempt on the Temple; and the very moment when her Majesty was about to walk upon the platform, an

order was given by Santerre that neither the queen, Madame Royale, nor Madame Elizabeth should go out to-day."

"The poor chevalier! he must be sadly disappointed."

"He was in despair when he saw the chance had thus escaped us, and turned so pale that I had to drag him away lest he should betray himself."

"But," asked Geneviève, timidly, "was there not then at the Temple any municipal of your acquaintance?"

"There ought to have been one, but he did not come."

"Who?"

"The Citizen Maurice Lindey," said Dixmer, in a tone he endeavored to render indifferent.

"And why did he not come?" said Geneviève, in her turn making a similar effort at self-command.

"He was ill."

"He — ill?"

"Yes, and seriously so. Patriot as you know him to be, he was obliged to cede his turn to another."

"This is most unfortunate."

"But, goodness, Geneviève!" replied Dixmer, "if he had been there, as matters now stand, it might have been just the same. Unfriendly as we are at present, he might perhaps have even avoided speaking to me."

"I think," replied Geneviève, "you exaggerate the unpleasantness of our situation. Monsieur Maurice may have taken a whim not to come here; may have some futile reasons to see us no more, — but is not on that account our enemy. Coolness does not exclude politeness, and I am convinced on seeing you come to him, he would meet you half-way."

"Geneviève," replied Dixmer, "what we require from Maurice needs something more than politeness, — a firm

and attached friendship. This feeling is destroyed; we have nothing further to hope from him."

And Dixmer heaved a deep sigh, while his usually placid face bore a troubled expression.

"But," said Geneviève, hesitatingly, "if you think that Monsieur Maurice is so necessary to your projects —"

"It amounts to this," replied Dixmer, "that I despair of being able to succeed without him."

"Well, then, why do you not try some new method to regain the Citizen Lindey?"

It seemed to her that in speaking of the young man by his surname, her voice sounded less tender than when she called him by his Christian name.

"No," replied Dixmer, shaking his head; "I have done all that I could. Any new proceeding would appear singular, and necessarily arouse his suspicions; and then, look you, Geneviève, I see further than you into this affair. Maurice feels deeply wounded."

"Wounded!" exclaimed Geneviève, greatly moved. "What would you say? Speak."

"You know as well as I do, Geneviève, that in our rupture with the Citizen Lindey there is more than caprice."

"To what then do you attribute this rupture?"

"To pride, perhaps," said Dixmer, quickly.

"To pride!"

"Yes; he did us honor, in his opinion at least, this good burgess of Paris, this demi-aristocrat of the gown, — concealing his susceptibilities under his patriotism; he conferred honor upon us, this Republican so powerful in his section, in his club, in his municipality, by according his friendship to a manufacturer of hides. Perhaps we have made too few advances; perhaps we have forgotten ourselves."

"If we had even been guilty in this respect, I think your last step would have redeemed all that," replied Geneviève.

"Yes; supposing the offence came from me; but if, on the contrary, it proceeded from you?"

"From me! Do you imagine that I have in any way offended Monsieur Maurice?" said Geneviève, astonished.

"Who knows, with a person like him! Did you not yourself at first accuse him of caprice? I therefore return to my first opinion, Geneviève; you did very wrong not to write to him."

"I!" cried Geneviève; "do you think so?"

"Not only do I think so now, but have done so ever since this rupture of the last three weeks."

"And —" asked Geneviève, timidly.

"I look upon this step as indispensable."

"No, no! Dixmer; do not exact this of me."

"You know, Geneviève, I make no exactions of you; I only entreat you. Well, listen; I beseech you to write the Citizen Maurice."

"But —" said Geneviève.

"Hearken!" said Dixmer, interrupting her; "there is between you and Maurice either some serious cause of quarrel, — for, so far as I am concerned, he has had no reason to complain of my conduct toward him, — or some childish disagreement."

Geneviève made no reply.

"If this is merely a silly broil, it is folly to render it lasting; and if you have serious motives for quarrelling, situated as we are, you ought not even to value your dignity or self-respect. We must not place in the balance the quarrels of young people against objects of the highest interest. Make one effort; subdue your own feelings,

and write one word only to Maurice Lindey, and he will return."

Geneviève reflected a moment.

"But," said she, "could we not find some means less compromising to renew friendly intercourse between Monsieur Maurice and yourself?"

"Compromising, do you call it? It appears to me, on the contrary, to be the most natural way possible."

"No; not for me, *mon ami*."

"You are very obstinate, Geneviève."

"Allow me to tell you it is the first time, at least, that you have discovered it."

Dixmer, who for some time had been crushing his handkerchief between his hands, now wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"Yes," said he; "and it is this that increases my astonishment."

"Good Heaven!" said Geneviève, "is it possible, Dixmer, that you do not divine the cause of my resistance, and that you wish to force me to speak?"

And overcome with contending emotions, her head sunk upon her breast, and her arms fell listlessly by her sides. Dixmer appeared to make a strenuous effort to command himself, took Geneviève's hand, compelled her to raise her head, looked into her eyes, and began to laugh; but in a manner so forced and unnatural, that had Geneviève been less agitated at the moment, it must have been evident even to her.

"I see how it is," said he; "you are in the right, and I was blind. With all your wit and distinction, my dear Geneviève, you have fallen into a vulgar notion, — you have been fearful that Maurice might fall in love with you."

Geneviève felt as if an icy chill had penetrated to her

heart. This irony on the part of her husband, relative to Maurice's affection for her, — that love of which, from the knowledge she possessed of the character of the young man, she could estimate all the violence, and in which, though only acknowledged with deep remorse, she participated in the depths of her heart, — this irony petrified her. She felt it was utterly impossible to reply.

"I have guessed rightly, have I not?" said Dixmer. "Well, reassure yourself, Geneviève; I know Maurice to be a fierce Republican, whose heart contains no other love than love of country."

"Sir!" exclaimed Geneviève, "are you certain of what you say?"

"Eh, without doubt," replied Dixmer. "If Maurice loved you, instead of quarrelling with me he would redouble his attentions and civilities to one whom it was his interest to deceive. If Maurice loved you, he would not so easily renounce his title of 'friend of the family,' generally used to cover these intrigues."

"Do not, I beseech you," cried Geneviève, "make a jest of these things."

"I do not jest, Madame; I only tell you Maurice does not love you, that is all."

"And I — I," said Geneviève, "tell you that you are mistaken."

"In that case," replied Dixmer, "Maurice, who has had sufficient strength to tear himself away rather than make a cuckold of his host, is an honest man; and as such men are rare, Geneviève, one cannot do too much to reclaim them when lost. Geneviève, you will write to Maurice, will you not?"

"Oh, my God!" cried the young woman, letting her head fall on her hands, for he to whom she looked for

support in a moment of danger had precipitated instead of restraining her fall.

Dixmer regarded her for a moment, then forcing a smile, —

"Come, darling," said he, "no woman's self-esteem. If Maurice wishes to recommence a declaration, laugh at the second as you did at the first. I know you, Geneviève, you are a worthy and noble woman. I can depend on you."

"Oh!" exclaimed the young woman, sinking on her knees, "how can one place confidence in others when one cannot place confidence in himself?"

Dixmer turned pale, as if all his blood had rushed back to his heart.

"Geneviève," said he, "I have done very wrong to cause you so much anguish of mind. I ought to have explained myself at once. Geneviève, we live in an epoch of self-sacrifice. I have devoted myself to the queen, our benefactress, — not only my arm, not only my head, but my happiness. Others will give her their lives; I do more than give her my life, — I risk my honor; and if that perishes, only one more tear will fall into the ocean of miseries which is preparing to swallow up France. But my honor runs no risk under the guardianship of such a woman as my Geneviève."

For the first time Dixmer had entirely revealed himself. Geneviève raised her head, and fixed her beautiful eyes, full of admiration, upon him; then slowly rose, and presented her forehead to him to kiss.

"You wish it?" said she.

Dixmer made a sign in the affirmative.

"Dictate, then," and she took up a pen.

"No; it is sufficient to use, not to abuse this worthy young man," said Dixmer; "and since he will be recon-

ciled himself to us on receipt of a letter from Geneviève, this letter should be from Geneviève, and not from Monsieur Dixmer."

And Dixmer a second time kissed his wife's forehead, thanked her, and went out.

Then Geneviève tremblingly wrote, —

CITIZEN MAURICE, — You know how much my husband respects you. Have three weeks of separation, which to us have appeared an age, made you forget? Come, we await you; your return will be a real fête. GENEVIÈVE.

CHAPTER XV.

THE GODDESS REASON.

As Maurice had informed General Santerre the preceding evening, he was seriously ill.

While he kept his chamber, Lorin in his daily visits had made use of every argument to induce him to enter into some active pursuit calculated to divert his mind from its trouble; but Maurice continued obstinate. There are some maladies we do not desire to heal. On the 1st of June, Lorin came about one o'clock.

"Is there anything particular going on to-day," asked Maurice, "that you are so superb?"

Indeed, Lorin was splendidly attired. He wore the *bonnet-rouge*, the *carmagnole*, and the tricolored girdle ornamented with two instruments, then called the "cruets of the Abbé Maury," but which before and since have been plumply and plainly termed pistols.

"In the first place," said Lorin, "it is generally the breaking up of the ice of the Gironde which is in train, but by beat of drum. At this moment, for example, they are heating the bullets red on the Place du Carrousel; then, in particular, there is a grand solemnity to which I invite you the day after to-morrow."

"But what is there to-day? You came for me, you say?"

"Yes; to-day we have the rehearsal."

"What rehearsal?"

"Why, the rehearsal of this great solemnity."

"My dear fellow," said Maurice, "you know that it is now eight days since I last went out; consequently I am ignorant of everything, and therefore the more require to be fully informed."

"What! Have I not told you?"

"You have told me nothing."

"First, you already know, we had suppressed God for some time past, and have replaced him with the 'Supreme Being.'"

"Yes; I know all that."

"Well, it seems they have found out something; that the 'Supreme Being' was a Moderate, a Rolandist, and, in short, a Girondin."

"No jesting on sacred subjects, Lorin; you know I do not like it."

"What would you have, my boy? we must keep up with the age. I too like the ancient God well enough; first, because I was accustomed to him. As for the 'Supreme Being,' it appears he really has faults, and since he has been above yonder, everything has been playing at cross-purposes; at all events, our legislators have decreed his downfall."

Maurice shrugged his shoulders.

"Shrug your shoulders as much as you please," said Lorin; "but now we are going to worship the 'Goddess Reason.'"

"And are you engaged in all these masquerades?"

"Ah! *mon ami*, if you knew the Goddess Reason as I know her, you would be one of her warmest partisans. Listen; I wish you to know her, and will present you to her."

"A truce to all this folly. I am out of spirits, you well know."

"The very thing, then; she will enliven you; she is a

nice girl. Ah! but you know the austere goddess whom the Parisians wish to crown with laurels, and drive about in a gilded paper-car! It is — guess."

"How can I guess?"

"It is Arthémise."

"Arthémise!" said Maurice, taxing his memory in vain to recollect the name.

"Yes; a tall brunette, with whom I formed an acquaintance last year at the Opera-ball; by the same token, you came to sup with us, and made her tipsy."

"Ah! yes," said Maurice, "I remember now. It is she, is it?"

"She has the best chance. I presented her to the concourse. All the Thermopyles have promised me their votes. In three days the general election will take place. To-day we enjoy the preparatory dinner, to-day we spill the wine of Champagne; perhaps after to-morrow we may spill blood! But let them spill what they like, Arthémise shall be goddess, or may the devil carry me away! Come, come, we will help her on with her tunic."

"Thanks; but I have always entertained a repugnance for things of this sort."

"To robe goddesses? *Peste!* old fellow, you are difficult to please. Let me see; if that does not suit you, I will put her tunic on, and you shall take it off."

"Lorin, I am ill, and not only out of spirits, but the gayety of others makes me miserable."

"Ah, that is it! You frighten me, Maurice; you no longer either laugh or fight. You surely are not engaged in any plot?"

"I? Would to God —"

"You mean, Would to the Goddess Reason!"

"Leave me, Lorin; I cannot, and will not, go out. I am in bed, and here let me rest in peace."

Lorin scratched his ear.

"Well," said he, "I see how it is."

"What do you see?"

"That you wait for the Goddess Reason."

"By Jove," cried Maurice, "witty friends are great bores. Go, or I shall load both you and your goddess with curses."

"Charge! charge!"

Maurice raised his hand to curse him, when he was interrupted by his official, who at this moment entered, bearing in his hand a letter for his brother citizen.

"Citizen Agesilaus," said Lorin, "you enter at an unfortunate moment. Your master was just going to be eloquent."

Maurice let fall his hand, which he listlessly extended for the letter; but the instant he touched it he started, and eagerly examining both the seal and handwriting, grew very pale in the anticipation of bad tidings, and broke the seal hastily.

"Oh, our interest is awakened at last," said Lorin, "it seems to me."

Maurice heard him not; his whole soul was merged in the four lines of Geneviève. He read and re-read them three or four times over; and then raising his head, gazed at Lorin like a man quite stupefied.

"The deuce!" said Lorin; "the intelligence must be wonderful indeed, which that letter contains."

Maurice read the letter for the fifth time; a hue of vermilion suffused his face, his eyes brightened, and a deep sigh relieved his breast; then forgetting at once his illness and attendant weakness, he leaped from his bed.

"My clothes!" cried he to the astonished official, — "my clothes, my dear Agesilaus. Oh, my poor Lorin —

my good Lorin, I expected this every day, but in truth I did not hope for it. Here, my white trousers and frilled shirt; please dress my hair and shave me immediately."

The official hastened to execute Maurice's orders, and dressed and shaved him in a trice.

"Oh, I shall again behold her! I shall again behold her!" cried the young man, "Lorin, I never till this moment knew what happiness meant!"

"My poor Maurice," said Lorin, "I think you require the visit I recommended to you."

"Oh, my dear friend, pardon me; for truly reason has forsaken me."

"Then I offer you mine," said Lorin, laughing at his own execrable pun.

The most surprising thing was that Maurice laughed also. His present happiness had made him so cheerful.

This was not all. "Wait," said he, cutting some orange blossom from a tree in full bloom; "present this from me to the worthy Widow Mausole."

"*A la bonne heure!*" said Lorin; "in consideration of your gallantry, I pardon you. Then it appears to me you are absolutely in love, and I always feel profound respect for the unfortunate."

"Yes, I am in love," said Maurice, and his heart dilated with joy. "I am in love; and now, since she loves me, I may declare it; for since she has recalled me, must she not love me, Lorin?"

"Doubtless," complacently replied the adorer of the Goddess Reason; "but take care, Maurice, for the fashion in which you take this makes me fear for you."

"Often love is but a freak
Of the tyrant men call Cupid.
'T is he bewitches when you speak
With any woman, howe'er stupid.
Come, then, with me, — love only Reason;
And so escape Dan Cupid's treason."

"Bravo, bravo!" cried Maurice, clapping his hands; then taking to his heels, he descended the steps four at a time, and directed his steps toward the well-known old Rue Saint Jacques.

"I believe he applauded me, Agesilaus, didn't he?" asked Lorin.

"He certainly did, Citizen; and no wonder, for those were very pretty verses that you repeated."

"He is worse than I thought him," said Lorin, in his turn descending the staircase in rather a calmer mood. Arthémise was not Geneviève.

Hardly had Lorin and his orange blossom arrived at the Rue Saint Honoré, when a crowd of young citizens, to whom he had been accustomed to administer either kicks or half-pence, according to his humor, respectfully followed him, — mistaking him, no doubt, for one of those virtuous individuals to whom Saint Just had proposed that people should offer a white robe and a bunch of orange blossoms.

As the cortège every moment increased in numbers, — for even at this epoch a virtuous man was a rare sight to behold, — there were several thousand young citizens present when the bouquet was offered to Arthémise, a homage which made several other "Reasons" who had joined the ranks very ill with sick headache next day. It was on the same evening that the famous distich was circulated through Paris, —

"Long life to Goddess Reason —
The pure, clear dawn of day."

And as it has come down to us without any knowledge of the author, — a fact which has powerfully exercised the sagacity of revolutionary archæologists, — we have almost the audacity to affirm that it was composed for the fair Arthémise by our friend, Hyacinthe Lorin.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PRODIGAL CHILD.

MAURICE could not have been quicker, had he even possessed wings. The streets were crowded, but Maurice only remarked the crowd as it retarded his course. It was said everywhere that the Convention was besieged; that the majesty of the people was offended through its representatives, whom they prevented from coming out; and of this there seemed some probability, as the ring of the tocsin was heard, and the thunder of the cannon sounding an alarm. But what at this moment, to Maurice, mattered either the tocsin or the cannon? What cared he whether the deputies were or were not able to come out, when the prohibition did not extend to him? So he quickened his pace, that was all. While running, he pictured to himself Geneviève waiting at the little window overlooking the garden, in order to see him; and that she would perceive him far off; and then her smile, more than ever charming, would welcome him back again.

Dixmer also was no doubt informed of this happy return, and would tender him his coarse, large hand, so frank and loyal in its greeting. He loved Dixmer; now even his love almost extended to Morand with his black locks and his green spectacles, behind which he fancied he could see the glitter of his brilliant but saturnine eyes.

He loved the whole world, for he was happy, and would willingly have showered flowers on the heads of all mankind that they might be as happy as himself.

But for once he was deceived. Poor Maurice! he deceived himself, as a man generally does when he reckons according to his wishes.

Instead of the sweet smile awaiting Maurice, which was to receive him when he would be seen from afar, Geneviève had determined on meeting Maurice with the most distant politeness, — a feeble rampart with which to oppose the torrent that threatened to invade her heart. She had retired to her chamber on the first floor, and did not intend coming down till sent for.

Alas! she also deceived herself.

Dixmer alone was not deceived; he watched for Maurice through a wired lattice, and smiled ironically.

Morand was gravely occupied in dyeing black some tails which are placed on white cat-skin to imitate ermine.

Maurice pushed open the little door of the alley, to enter unceremoniously through the garden; as of old, the door opening rang a little bell which indicated the arrival of Maurice.

Geneviève, who had stationed herself behind the closed window, started, and let fall the curtain she had drawn on one side.

The first sensation experienced by Maurice on entering his friend's house was disappointment. Not only was Geneviève absent from the window on the ground-floor, but on entering the little salon where he had uttered his last adieu, he found her not, and was compelled to announce himself, as if an absence of three weeks' duration had transformed him into a stranger. His heart was oppressed.

It was Dixmer whom Maurice first saw. He came forward, and embraced him with exclamations of joy.

Geneviève then came down. She had tried in vain to restore some color to her pallid cheek; but before she

had proceeded twenty steps the blood receded to her heart.

Maurice saw Geneviève appear in the shadow of the door; he advanced toward her smiling, intending to kiss her hand, and then only perceived how sadly she was changed. She on her part noticed with anxiety the attenuated frame of Maurice, and his fevered look of wild excitement.

"You are here then, sir," said she, in a voice whose emotion she could not subdue.

She had determined to address him with perfect indifference.

"Good-day, Citizen Maurice; why have your visits been so rare of late?"

This fickleness appeared more strange still to Maurice, and now what a shadow was cast upon all!

Dixmer cut short this examination, and put an end to all reciprocal reproaches by ordering dinner to be served; it was nearly two o'clock. They passed into the *salle-à-manger*, where Maurice saw a cover was placed for him. Then the Citizen Morand arrived, dressed in the same chestnut-colored coat and in the same waistcoat — he always wore his green spectacles — and white frilled shirt, and had the same long thick black hair. Maurice felt so well-disposed toward him that he wondered now when he had Morand before him that he should have ever felt the least concern about his rivalry at a distance. In short, what probability was there that Geneviève loved this little chemist? He was in love, and in consequence a fool to allow such folly to enter into his heart.

Besides, the moment would have been badly chosen for jealousy. Maurice carried within his waistcoat do not Geneviève's last letter, and his heart, bounding wards who, beat beneath it. e to torture

the vanquished in order to persuade themselves that they are the conquerors."

"You are not one of those men, Maurice, I am quite certain," said Geneviève.

"Madame," replied Maurice, "I who now speak to you mounted guard near the scaffold on which perished the late king. My drawn sabre in my hand, I was prepared to slay any one who attempted to rescue him. Notwithstanding, on his approach I removed my hat, and turning toward my men said, —

"'Citizens, I here warn you that I shall run my sword through the body of the first man that insults the king.'

"And I defy any one to assert that a single shout was heard to proceed from my company. From my hand first emanated those ten thousand placards affixed to the walls of Paris after the king's return from Varennes, —

"'Whoever acknowledges the king shall be flogged. Whoever insults the king shall be hanged.'

"Well," continued Maurice, without noticing the deep impression his words had produced on his listeners, — "well, I have proved to you that I am a frank, good patriot, that I hate all kings and their partisans. Yet I declare, notwithstanding my opinion, which is nothing short of a firm conviction, that, notwithstanding the certainty I feel that the Austrian is in a great measure the cause of the miseries that desolate France, never, never shall any man, — let him be who he may, even Santerre himself, — insult the ex-queen in my presence."

"Citizen," said Dixmer, shaking his head as if he disapproved of so much hardihood, "are you aware you ought to be very sure of us before you make such declarations in our presence?"

"I make them before you, and would do so before all the world, Dixmer; and I will add, she may perhaps

perish on the same scaffold as her husband, but I am not one to fear a woman; on the contrary, I have a kindly regard for all those who are weaker than myself."

"And the queen, Monsieur Maurice?" demanded Geneviève, timidly; "has she sometimes evinced her sense of this delicacy, to which she is so little accustomed?"

"The prisoner has thanked me several times for my consideration for her, Madame."

"Then she must expect your turn to guard with pleasure?"

"I believe she does, Madame," replied Maurice.

"Then," said Morand, tremulous as a woman, "since you have confessed what no one nowadays confesses, — that you have a generous heart, — you will not surely persecute the children either?"

"I!" said Maurice; "ask the infamous Simon the weight of the arm of the municipal before whom he had the audacity to beat the little Capet."

This answer produced a spontaneous movement at Dixmer's table. All the guests rose respectfully; Maurice alone remained seated, and had not the slightest idea that he had elicited this mark of admiration.

"Why, what on earth is the matter?" said he, astonished.

"I thought some one called from the manufactory," said Dixmer.

"No," said Geneviève; "at first I thought so too; but we are mistaken." And all resumed their seats.

"Ah! it is you then, Citizen Maurice," said Morand, in a tremulous voice, "who are the municipal so much talked about, and who so nobly defended a child."

"Talked about?" said Maurice, with the utmost *naïveté*.

"Yours is a noble heart," said Morand, rising from

the table. That he might give way to his feelings, he retired to the manufactory, as if some pressing business there awaited him.

"Yes, Citizen," replied Dixmer; "they do speak about it, and it should be said that all those possessed of brave, generous hearts applaud without knowing you."

"And let him remain unknown," said Geneviève. "The glory he would acquire would be replete with danger."

Thus in this singular conversation, without knowing it, each had contributed his word of heroism, devotion, and sensibility. There had been love and admiration which could not be expressed in words.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MINERS.

At the moment they left the table, Dixmer was told that his notary awaited him in his study. He excused himself to Maurice; besides, he was accustomed to leave him thus, and proceeded to attend his man of business.

He was negotiating for the purchase of a small house, Rue de la Corderie, facing the garden of the Temple. It was rather, as to the rest, a lot than a house that Dixmer was purchasing, for the present building was in a state of dilapidation; but it was his intention to rebuild it.

The bargain had not been delayed with the proprietor; that same morning the notary had seen him and agreed to pay 19,500 francs. He therefore brought the agreement for signature, and came to receive the requisite money for the purchase, as the proprietor would that day clear out the building that the workmen might commence operations on the morrow.

The contract signed, Dixmer and Morand accompanied the notary to the Rue de la Corderie, to view this new acquisition; for they had purchased without seeing it.

It was a house situated near where No. 20 now stands, — three stories in height, and surmounted by a curved roof. The lower part at one time had been let to a wine-merchant, and contained some most excellent cellarage.

The proprietor, above all things, vaunted his cellars; they were the best part of the house. Dixmer and

Morand appeared to attach very little interest to these cellars, yet both, as if from mere politeness, descended with the proprietor into what he called his vaults.

An exception to the general rule, he had not exaggerated. The cellars were magnificent; one of them extended under the Rue de la Corderie, and from this cellar they could hear the carriages roll over their heads.

Dixmer and Morand did not appear to appreciate this advantage. They even spoke of filling them up, observing that however convenient they might be to a wine-merchant, they became perfectly useless to honest burgesses, who intended to occupy the whole of the house.

After the cellars they visited the first, second, and third story; from the third they completely over-looked the garden of the Temple. It was, as usual, invaded by the National Guard, who enjoyed this privilege, since the queen never walked there now.

Dixmer and Morand recognized their friend, the Widow Plumeau, with her usual activity, doing the honors of her tavern; but doubtless their anxiety to be in their turn remembered by her was not very great, as they kept themselves concealed behind the proprietor, while he expatiated on the advantages of this view, at once so varied and agreeable.

The purchaser then wished to see the attics.

The proprietor, doubtless, was unprepared for this demand, since he had not got the key; but soothed by the bundle of bills shown him, he descended to search for it.

"I was not deceived," said Morand, "and this house will answer our purpose exactly."

"And what do you say to the vaults?"

"That it is an interposition of Providence, which will spare us two days' labor at least."

"Do you think that it is in the direction of the cantine?"

"It inclines a little to the left; but that is of no consequence."

"But," said Dixmer, "how will you be able to follow your subterranean line with the certainty of its terminating where you wish?"

"Rest assured," said Morand; "that is my affair."

"If we were every day to give a signal from here that we are watching?"

"But from the platform the queen could not see it; for the attics alone are as high as the platform, and I am doubtful even about them."

"Never mind," said Dixmer, "either Maury or Toulan may see it from some opening, and they will inform the queen."

And Dixmer tied several knots in a white calico curtain, passing it backward and forward before the window as if shaken by the wind.

Then both, as if impatient to visit the attic, awaited the proprietor's return on the staircase, having first closed the door, not wishing to afford the worthy man a sight of his waving curtain.

The garrets, as Morand had foreseen, did not reach the height of the summit of the tower. This was at once an advantage and disadvantage, — a disadvantage, because they could not communicate by signs with the queen; and an advantage, because the very impracticability alone disarmed all suspicion. The highest houses were naturally the objects of the strictest surveillance.

"It is necessary, either by means of Toulan, Maury, or Tison's daughter, to find some way to tell her to keep upon the watch," murmured Dixmer.

"I have thought of that," said Morand.

They descended; the notary waited in the salon with the contract signed.

"It is all right," said Dixmer; "the house suits me; so hand over to the proprietor the sum of 19,500 francs in payment, and let him give a receipt."

The proprietor did so, first scrupulously counting the money.

"You understand, Citizen," said Dixmer, "the principal clause, that the house must be vacated this evening; that, in short, I must put the workmen in to-morrow."

"Well, Citizen, I agree to do so. You can take the keys this evening at eight o'clock; all will be free."

"Pardon me," said Dixmer, "but did you not tell me, Citizen Notary, there was a way out leading into the Rue Portefoin?"

"Yes, Citizen," said the proprietor; "but I had it closed; for having only one official, the poor devil had too much fatigue, being obliged to watch both doors. But it is so built up that at any time it can be reopened in two hours at least. Would you wish to convince yourselves, citizens?"

"Thanks, it is not necessary," said Dixmer, "I attach no importance to this way out; it is useless to me."

They then both left, having for the third time reminded the landlord of his promise that the apartments should be empty at eight o'clock that evening.

At nine o'clock they both returned, followed by five or six men at a distance, of whom, in the confusion then reigning in Paris, no one took any notice. They both entered first. The landlord had kept his word; the house was totally empty.

They closed the shutters with the greatest care, and with the aid of a tinder-box, lighted some wax candles which Morand had taken in his pocket.

Then one after another the six men entered. These were the ordinary guests of the master-tanner, the same contrabandists who one evening wished to kill Maurice, but had now become his friends.

They closed the doors, and descended into the vault.

This vault, so contemptuously treated during the day, had become at night the most important part of the house.

Having first stopped up every crevice through which a curious eye might penetrate to the interior, Morand placed a cask upright, and began to trace with a crayon geometrical lines upon a piece of paper.

While he was thus engaged, his companions, conducted by Dixmer, left the house, following the Rue de la Corderie, and at the corner of the Rue de Beauce stopped before a covered carriage. In this carriage was a man who silently distributed to each one the instrument of a pioneer, — to one a spade, to another a mattock, to this one a lever, to that a pickaxe ; each man concealed his tool under his overcoat, or mantle. The miners retraced the road to the small house, and the carriage disappeared.

Morand had finished his calculation.

He went straight to an angle of the cave.

" There," said he, " dig ! "

And the work of deliverance immediately commenced.

The situation of the unhappy prisoners in the Temple became daily more serious and hourly more wretched. For an instant the queen, Madame Elizabeth, and Madame Royale had indulged some hope. The municipals Toulan and Lepître, touched with compassion for the august prisoners, had evinced some interest in them. At first little habituated to the marks of sympathy, the poor women were suspicious ; but suspicion ceases to

exist where there is hope. Besides, what now could happen to the queen, separated from her son by a prison, from her husband by death? To follow him to the scaffold, — this idea had possessed her for some time, and she had now become accustomed to it.

The first time Toulan and Lepître returned on guard, the queen particularly requested, if they really felt any interest in her misfortunes, they would describe to her the last moments of the king. This was putting their sympathy to a sad test. Lepître had assisted at the execution; he obeyed the order of the queen.

The queen demanded the journals containing the report of the execution. Lepître promised to bring them when next on guard; it would be his turn again in three weeks. In the king's time they had at the Temple four municipals; the king dead, they had only three, — one to watch during the day, two during the night. Toulan and Lepître invented a stratagem, that they might always keep watch together at night.

The hours of guard were drawn by lot; they wrote on one ballot "day," on two others "night." Each drew his ballot from a hat, and chance decided the night-watch.

Every time that Toulan and Lepître were on guard they wrote "day" on three ballots, and presented the hat to the municipal they wished to oust, and he, thrusting his hand into the improvised urn, necessarily drew forth a ballot on which was inscribed "day." They then destroyed the other two, murmuring against the hazard which always decreed them the most wearisome watch of the two, — that is to say, the night.

When the queen was sure of her guards she corresponded with the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. Then an escape was attempted, but the attempt was detected. The queen and Madame Elizabeth were to flee disguised

as municipal officers, with cards that would be provided for them. As to the two children, — that is to say, Madame Royale and the young dauphin, — they had remarked that the man who came to light the lamps of the Temple was always accompanied by two children, of the same age apparently as the Princess Royale and the dauphin. It was therefore arranged that Turgy, of whom we have previously spoken, should dress himself as the lamplighter, and carry away the prince and princess.

We will mention in a few words who Turgy was.

Turgy was an old waiter of the king's, introduced at the Temple with part of the family from the Tuileries, for the king had at first been permitted a well-appointed table. The first month this consideration cost the nation thirty or forty thousand francs.

It may easily be understood this prodigality could not last. The Commune decreed otherwise. They dismissed the chefs, the cooks, and scullions; one single manservant only was retained, — that man was Turgy.

He was naturally the medium of communication between the prisoners and their partisans, for Turgy was permitted to go out, and consequently was enabled to forward their letters, and introduce the replies. These billets were generally twisted round the stoppers of the *carafes* containing the milk of almonds brought to the queen and Madame Elizabeth. They were written with lemon-juice, and perfectly illegible till held near the fire.

All was prepared for the escape, when one day Tison lighted his pipe with the paper-stopper of a *carafe*. As the paper burned, the writing became visible. He instantly extinguished the half-burned paper, and carried the remaining fragment to the Council of the Temple, when, being held near the fire, they could only read a

few disjointed words, the other part being burned to ashes. But they recognized the handwriting of the queen. Tison, being questioned, mentioned some slight marks of attention and sympathy he fancied he had observed on the part of Lepitre and Toulan toward the prisoners. The two guards were immediately denounced to the municipality, and allowed no more to enter the Temple.

Turgy remained.

But suspicion was now excited to the highest degree. He was never left a single moment alone with the princesses. All communication with the exterior was now utterly impossible.

Madame Elizabeth had nevertheless one day given Turgy a little gold knife to clean, with which she used to cut fruit. Turgy suspected something, and when wiping the knife drew off the handle, and in the handle found a letter.

This letter contained an alphabet of signs.

He returned the knife to Madame Elizabeth; but a municipal then present prevented him, and in his turn securing the knife, took the blade and handle apart; but fortunately the letter was no longer there. The municipal nevertheless confiscated the knife.

It was at that time that the indefatigable Chevalier de Maison-Rouge meditated this second attempt, which they intended to carry into execution by means of the house which Dixmer had purchased.

The prisoners, however, had by degrees lost all hope. That day the queen, terrified by the noise in the streets which reached her ears, and learning from these cries that they were debating the trial of the Girondins, the last supporters of moderation, felt dreadfully depressed. The Girondins dead, the royal family lost their only defence in the Convention.

At seven o'clock the supper was served. The municipals examined every plate as usual, unfolded each napkin successively, searched the bread, the one with a fork, the other with his fingers, and concluded by breaking into pieces the macaroons and walnuts, for fear any letter should reach the prisoners. These precautions being concluded, the royal family were invited to their meal in these simple words: —

"Widow Capet, you may eat."

The queen shook her head, signifying she was not hungry. But at this moment Madame Royale advanced, as if to embrace her mother, and whispered, —

"Seat yourself at table, Madame. I fancied Turgy made a sign."

The queen, tremblingly, raised her head. Turgy was opposite to her. The napkin laid over his left arm, and with his right hand he touched his eye.

She immediately rose, without any further objection, and resumed her usual place at table.

The two municipals assisted at the meal, being strictly prohibited from leaving the princesses alone for an instant with Turgy.

The feet of the queen and Madame Elizabeth met, and pressed each other under the table.

As the queen was seated opposite Turgy, not one of his gestures escaped her notice; besides, they were all so natural that they neither could nor did inspire the municipals with any suspicion whatever.

At the removal of the supper the same precautions were used as before; the smallest pieces of bread were taken up and examined. After which, Turgy went out first, the two municipals following; the woman Tison remained.

This woman had become ferocious since her separation

from her daughter, of whose fate she was totally ignorant. Every time the queen lavished a caress on Madame Royale, it threw her into an excess of rage almost bordering on frenzy; so much so, that the queen, who so well understood the griefs of a mother, often denied herself this consolation — now, alas! the only one left her — of pressing her daughter to her heart.

Tison came now to seek for his wife, who at first declared she would not leave till Widow Capet was in bed.

Madame Elizabeth then wished the queen good-night, and entered her chamber.

The queen and princess having also retired, Tison's wife took the candle and went out.

The municipals had already thrown themselves upon their beds in the corridor.

The moon, pale visitant of the unhappy princesses, shone through the window of the roof, casting her rays across the foot of the queen's bed.

For an instant everything remained calm and silent in the chamber.

Then a door turned softly on its hinges, a shadow passed across the rays of the moon, and approached the queen, — it was Madame Elizabeth.

"Did you notice?" said she, in a whisper.

"Yes," replied the queen.

"And you understood?"

"So well that I dare not believe it."

"Let us see; repeat the signs."

"First, then, he touched his eye to indicate he had some news for us; then he passed his napkin from his left to his right, which meant that they were occupied in our deliverance. Then he put his hand to his face, to signify that the expected aid would reach us from the in-

terior, and not from a stranger; then when you asked him not to forget the milk of almonds to-morrow, he made two knots in his pocket-handkerchief. Thus it is again the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, — noble-hearted man that he is."

"It is he," said Madame Elizabeth.

"Are you asleep, my child?" demanded the queen.

"No, *ma mère*," replied Madame Royale.

"Then pray for you know whom."

Madame Elizabeth quietly regained her chamber, and for some minutes during the silence of the night the soft, sweet voice of the youthful princess might be heard addressing her prayer to God. It was at that moment, at a signal from Morand, the first stroke of the pick-axe sounded in the small house at Rue de la Corderie.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLOUDS.

Aside from the intoxication of renewed visits, Maurice was certainly much disappointed at the reception of Geneviève, and reckoned upon solitary interviews to regain the road he had lost, or seemed to have lost, in her affections.

But Geneviève had wisely arranged her plan, and did not intend to allow him an opportunity for a *tête-à-tête*, being conscious of their danger even from the happiness they afforded her.

Maurice trusted to the morrow. A kinswoman of Geneviève's, no doubt previously invited, came to call upon her, and Geneviève had retained her. This time there was nothing to be said; it could not be the fault of Geneviève. When leaving, Maurice was requested to escort this relation to Rue des Fossés Saint Victor, where she resided. Maurice went away pouting, but Geneviève smiled, and he construed this smile into a promise.

Alas! Maurice deceived himself. The next day, the 2d of June, that terrible day that witnessed the downfall of the Girondins, Maurice dismissed his friend Lorin, who absolutely wished to carry him off to the Convention, and put everything aside that he might visit his fair friend. The Goddess of Liberty had a powerful rival in Geneviève.

Maurice found Geneviève in her little salon, all grace and amiability, but near her was a young *femme-de-*

chambre with the tricolored cockade, engaged in marking pocket-handkerchiefs in the corner of the window, who never left her place.

Maurice knitted his brows, and Geneviève, perceiving he was not in the best temper possible, redoubled her assiduities; but since her amiability was not carried so far as to dismiss the young official, he impatiently left an hour earlier than usual.

All this might have perhaps happened by chance. Maurice took patience. The political situation, besides, was so terrible that long as it was since he had interested himself in public affairs, the report reached even him. It required nothing less than the downfall of a party who had reigned in France for ten months to withdraw his attention from his all-engrossing passion for Geneviève.

The next day witnessed the same management on the part of Geneviève, and Maurice, having foreseen this, had arranged his plan. So ten minutes after his arrival, seeing that the young woman, having finished marking a dozen pocket-handkerchiefs, commenced six dozen of table napkins, Maurice, we say, drew out his watch, rose, bowed to Geneviève, and went out without saying one word.

Still more, as he left, he did not even once look back.

Geneviève, who had risen to watch him across the garden, remained an instant speechless, pale, and trembling, then dropped into her chair, thunderstruck at the effect of her diplomacy.

At this moment Dixmer entered.

"Maurice gone?" said he, with astonishment.

"Yes," stammered Geneviève.

"But he had only just arrived."

"He was here a quarter of an hour, or nearly so."

"Then he will return?"

"I much doubt it."

"Leave us, Muguet [lily of the valley]," said Dixmer.

The *femme-de-chambre* had assumed the name of the flower from hatred to her baptismal name of Marie, which was unfortunately that of the Austrian.

She rose at the command of her master, and quitted the room.

"Well, dear Geneviève," said Dixmer, "is peace restored between you and Maurice?"

"On the contrary, I think we are cooler than ever."

"And this time, who is to blame?" said Dixmer.

"Maurice, without the slightest doubt."

"Permit me to judge."

"What!" said Geneviève, blushing, "you cannot guess —"

"Why he is angry? No."

"It seems to me, it is some whim about Muguet."

"Bah! truly; then you must send the girl away. I will not deprive myself of a friend like Maurice for the sake of a *femme-de-chambre*."

"Oh!" said Geneviève, "he is not, I think, so angry as to require her to be sent away; it will suffice to —"

"What?"

"To exile her from my chamber."

"And Maurice is right," said Dixmer; "it is you he comes to visit, and not Muguet; it is therefore quite unnecessary that she should be present."

"But, my dear Dixmer," replied she, regarding her husband with astonishment.

"Geneviève," replied Dixmer, "I hoped to have found in you an ally who would render more easy the task imposed upon me, and find, on the contrary, that your fears redouble our dangers and difficulties. Four days since

I thought all was settled between us, and now everything must be done over again. Have I not told you that I confide in you, in your honor? Have I not told you that it is positively necessary that Maurice should become our friend, more intimate than before, but less suspicious than ever? Oh, *mon Dieu!* these women are an everlasting obstacle to our projects."

"But, is there no other way? I have told you before, that for all our sakes it would be better if Monsieur Maurice returned here no more."

"Yes, for our sakes, perhaps; but for the sake of her who is far above us, of her for whom we have promised to sacrifice our lives, fortune, and happiness, it is necessary that this young man should return. Are you aware they begin to suspect Turgy, and talk of placing another servant near the queen?"

"Well, I will send away Muguet."

"Gracious Heaven! Geneviève," said Dixmer, with a movement of impatience very unusual with him, "why do you speak to me thus; why stifle the ardor of my ideas by your own; why strive to create difficulties where too many already exist? Geneviève, act like an honorable, devoted woman; act as you feel you ought to act. I tell you, to-morrow I go out — to-morrow I take Morand's place as engineer. I shall not dine with you, but he will; he has something to ask Maurice, and will explain to you what it is. What he has to request you may imagine, Geneviève, is a thing of vital import; it is not indeed the goal to which we march, but the way leading to it. It is the last hope of that devoted, noble-minded man, our protector, to whom we are bound to dedicate our lives."

"And for whom I will freely give mine," cried Geneviève, with enthusiasm.

"Well, this man, Geneviève, I cannot tell why, as you must have seen is not loved by Maurice, by whom, above all things, it is necessary he should be respected. In short, from the bad temper in which you have put Maurice to-day, he may perhaps refuse Morand that which it is so imperative we should obtain at any price. Do I now need to tell you, Geneviève, to what dread end your petty delicacy and sentimentality are leading Morand?"

"Oh, sir!" cried Geneviève, clasping her hands and turning pale, "let us never mention that!"

"Then," said Dixmer, pressing his lips to his wife's forehead, "reflect upon it, and form your resolution;" and he went out.

"O my God!" murmured Geneviève, with anguish, "with what violence do they compel me to accept this love toward which my whole soul inclines!"

The next day, as we have already said, was Sunday.

It was customary in the family of Dixmer, as in all the bourgeoise families at that period, that the dinner should be longer and more ceremonious on that day than on any other. Since their intimacy, Maurice, having received a general invitation, never omitted to dine with them on that day. Although they did not dine till two o'clock, Maurice used to come at noon.

From the manner of their parting, however, Geneviève almost despaired of seeing him that Sunday.

In short, twelve o'clock struck, then half-past, then one.

It would be impossible to describe what passed in the heart of Geneviève during this period of anxious expectation.

She was at first dressed with the greatest simplicity; then, seeing that he delayed his coming, she, with a feeling of coquetry natural to the heart of woman, had

placed a flower at her side, a flower in her hair, and still listened, her heart each moment beating faster and faster. The dinner-hour had almost arrived, and Maurice had not appeared.

At ten minutes to two, Geneviève heard the sound of a horse's feet, that sound she knew so well.

"Oh!" cried she, "his pride could not wrestle against his love. He loves me! he loves me!"

Maurice dismounted, and gave his horse to the gardener, desiring him to remain where he was. Geneviève saw with anxiety that the gardener did not lead the horse to the stables.

Maurice on this day looked superlatively handsome. A splendid black coat, a white waistcoat, breeches of chamois leather designed for limbs after the model of Apollo, a white cambric stock, and his waving hair, displaying a fresh, beaming face, formed altogether a type of manly beauty.

He entered. As we have already said, his presence swelled the heart of Geneviève, who received him joyfully. "Ah!" said she, holding out her hand, "you have come to dine with us, have you not?"

"On the contrary, Citizen," said Maurice, coldly, "I have come to ask your permission to absent myself."

"To absent yourself?"

"Yes; the sectional affairs claim my attention. I feared you might wait, and would accuse me of being wanting in politeness, therefore came to make my excuses in person."

Geneviève again felt her heart sink within her.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" cried she, "and Dixmer, who does not dine at home, counted upon finding you here on his return, and desired me to detain you."

"Ah, then, Madame! I comprehend your importunity,

it is a command of your husband's; and I not to guess all this! I shall never cure myself of conceit."

"Maurice!"

"It is for me, Madame, to draw my inference from your actions rather than your words; it is for me therefore to comprehend that if Dixmer is absent the greater the reason I should not remain. His absence would surely add to your constraint."

"Why so?" timidly inquired Geneviève.

"Because you appear, since my return, sedulously to avoid me, notwithstanding I returned for your sake, and yours only; and you well know, *mon Dieu!* that ever since my return I have invariably found some one with you."

"Then," said Geneviève, "you are still angry, *mon ami*, although I endeavor to act for the best."

"No, Geneviève; you would do much better to receive me as before, or drive me away altogether."

"Maurice," said Geneviève, tenderly, "understand my situation, consider my anguish, and do not enact the tyrant over me any longer."

And the young woman regarded him mournfully.

Maurice remained silent.

"What do you require then?" continued she.

"I require your love, Geneviève; since I now feel I cannot live without that love."

"Maurice! have pity on me."

"Then, Madame, you leave me to die."

"To die?"

"Yes, to die, or to forget."

"You could then forget?" said Geneviève, the tears rushing from her heart to her eyes.

"Ah, no, no!" said Maurice, falling on his knees before her; "no, Geneviève, I may die, perhaps, but forget you, never, never!"

"And yet," replied Geneviève, with firmness, "that would be the best, Maurice; for this love is criminal."

"Have you said this to Monsieur Morand?" said Maurice, recalled to himself by her sudden frigidity of manner.

"Monsieur Morand is not a madman like yourself, and has never yet compelled me to indicate to him how he should conduct himself in the house of a friend."

"I wager," said Maurice, smiling ironically, "that if Dixmer dines out Morand is not absent. Ah, Geneviève, by this means you can always deter me from loving you; for while Morand is here, forever at your side, not quitting you even for a single moment," continued he, contemptuously, "I should not love you, or rather I should not confess that I loved you."

"And I," cried Geneviève, driven to extremity by this eternal suspicion, and seizing the young man's arm with a species of frenzy, "I swear solemnly — now, Maurice, mark me well, and let it be once for all — that Morand has never breathed to me a word of love, that he neither loves me nor ever will love me. I swear this on my honor; I swear this by the soul of my mother

"Alas! alas!" said Maurice, "I wish I could believe you."

"Oh, believe me, poor foolish youth!" said she, with a smile which, to any one else than one blind with jealousy, would have been a charming confession of the state of her heart, — "believe me. Besides, if you wish to know more, Morand loves a woman in whose presence all others sink into insignificance, as the flowers of the field fade before the stars of heaven."

"And who is this woman who is able to eclipse all other women," demanded Maurice, "when among the number we find Geneviève?"

"Do we not always," said Geneviève, smiling, "consider the one we love as the *chef d'œuvre* of the creation?"

"Then," said Maurice, "if you do not love me, Geneviève —"

The young woman waited with anxiety the end of the sentence.

"If you do not love me," continued Maurice, "will you at least swear never to love another?"

"Ah! that, Maurice, I will swear with all my heart," cried the young woman, delighted that he had thus compromised with her conscience.

Maurice seized the hands she was raising to Heaven, and covered them with ardent kisses.

"And now," said he, "I will be kind, indulgent, and confiding. I will even be generous. I wish to see you smile, and myself to be happy."

"And you will ask me nothing more?"

"I will endeavor."

"And now," said Geneviève, "I think it will be useless to hold the horse any longer. The section will wait."

"Oh, Geneviève! the whole world might wait, if I could only stay with you!"

Steps were heard in the court-yard.

"They come to tell us that dinner is ready," said Geneviève. They silently pressed each other's hands.

It was Morand, who came to tell them they only awaited their presence at table. He also was in full dress for the Sunday's dinner.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE REQUEST.

In the mean time Morand did not a little excite the curiosity of Maurice. The most refined of fops could not discover a fault in the tie of his cravat, the folds of his boots, or the texture of his linen; but it must be allowed his hair and spectacles were always the same. It then appeared to Maurice, so much was he reassured by the oath of Geneviève, that he now for the first time viewed these locks and spectacles in a proper light.

"The devil!" said Maurice to himself as he went to meet him, — "the devil take me if I am now ever again jealous of this worthy Citizen Morand. Put on every day, if you choose, your full-dress coat, or even make yourself one of cloth of gold, since from this time I promise to see nothing but your hair and spectacles, and above all, never again to accuse you of loving Geneviève."

We can easily understand that the shake of the hand bestowed upon the Citizen Morand at the conclusion of this soliloquy was more frank and cordial than usual. Contrary to custom, the party was small, covers being placed for only three on a narrow table.

Geneviève was seated nearly opposite Maurice, between himself and the light, which reflected on her luxuriant black curls, tingeing them with the blue hue of the raven's wing, and enhancing the brilliancy of her eyes and complexion.

Beyond his pigeon-colored suit, Morand appeared to have dismissed all recollection of the day from his mind, — that brilliant wit which Maurice had sometimes heard burst fresh from the lips of this singular man, which would no doubt have been accompanied by flashes from his eyes, had they not been totally obscured by the green spectacles.

He uttered a thousand witticisms, but never himself smiled; indeed, what added piquancy to his witticisms and a strange charm to his sallies was his own imperturbable gravity. This merchant, who had made numerous voyages and visited various countries, trading in every sort of skin, from the skin of the panther to that of the rabbit; this chemist, with arms dyed with his own chemical preparations, — was as conversant with Egypt as Herodotus, Africa as Lavaillant, and the Opera and the boudoir as any fop.

"But the devil take me, Monsieur Morand," said Maurice, "you are not only a clever man, but a scholar also."

"Ah! I have both seen and read much," said Morand; "and then it is necessary I should prepare myself in some degree for the life of pleasure I intend to lead when I retire on my fortune. It is time, Citizen Maurice, it is time."

"Bah!" said Maurice; "you talk like an old man. What age then are you?"

Morand turned round, startled by this question, natural as it certainly was.

"I am thirty-eight," said he. "Ah! see what it is to be a scholar, as you term it. It makes one old."

Geneviève began to laugh, and Maurice joined in; but Morand merely smiled.

"You have, then, made several voyages?" demanded Maurice, pressing Geneviève's foot between his own.

"Part of my youth," replied Morand, "was passed in a foreign land."

"And you have seen much? — pardon me, I ought to say, have observed much; for a man like yourself cannot see without observing," replied Maurice.

"*Ma foi!* yes; seen much?" replied Morand, "I have seen almost everything."

"Everything, Citizen," replied Maurice, laughing; "that is saying a great deal. If you were to search — "

"Ah, yes! you are right; there are two things I have never seen. It is true, in our days, these two things are becoming more and more rare."

"What are they, then?" demanded Maurice.

"The first," said Morand, gravely, "is a god."

"Ah!" said Maurice, "but in lieu of a god I shall be able to show you a goddess, Citizen Morand."

"How so?" interrupted Geneviève.

"Yes; a goddess of quite modern creation, — the Goddess Reason. I have a friend, of whom you have sometimes heard me speak, — my dear and brave Lorin, — with a heart of gold, whose only fault is that of making verses and vile puns."

"Well?"

"Well, he selected for Paris a Goddess Reason, in good condition, and in whom they can discover nothing at all objectionable. It is the Citizeness Arthémise, ex-dancer at the Opera, and at present dealer in perfumes, Rue Martin. As soon as she is definitely received as goddess, I will show her to you."

Morand bowed his head in token of thanks, and continued, —

"The other," said he gravely, "is a king."

"Ah! that is more difficult," said Geneviève; "there are no more of them," she added, forcing a smile.

"You should have seen the last," said Maurice; "it would have been prudent to do so."

"The result is," said Morand, "I have not the least idea of a crowned head; it must be very sad?"

"Very sad, indeed," said Maurice; "I will answer for it, — I who see one nearly every month."

"A crowned head?" demanded Geneviève.

"At least," said Maurice, "one that has borne the weight and miserable burden of a crown."

"Ah, yes! the queen," said Morand; "truly, Monsieur Maurice, it must be a melancholy sight —"

"Is she as proud and beautiful as they say?" demanded Geneviève.

"Have you never seen her then, Madame?" demanded Maurice, surprised in his turn.

"I? never!" replied the young woman.

"Indeed!" said Maurice, "that is strange."

"And why strange?" said Geneviève. "We lived in the country till '91; since '91 we have resided in the old Rue Saint Jacques, which much resembles the country, only here they have neither light nor air, and still less flowers. You are acquainted with my life, Citizen Maurice? It has always been the same. How do you suppose I could have seen the queen, when I have had no opportunity whatever of so doing?"

"And I do not think you will avail yourself of that which unfortunately, perhaps, may present itself," said Maurice.

"What do you mean?" demanded Geneviève.

"The Citizen Maurice," replied Morand, "alludes to a thing no longer a secret."

"To what?" demanded Geneviève.

"To the probable condemnation of Marie Antoinette, and to her death upon the same scaffold where her hus-

band died. The citizen said, in short, that you would not avail yourself of the opportunity offered you of seeing her the day when she will quit the Temple for the Place de la Revolution."

"Oh, certainly not!" cried Geneviève, as Morand pronounced these words with the utmost sang-froid.

"Then you can only lament," said the impassible chemist; "for the Austrian is well guarded, and the Republic a fairy that renders invisible whatever she pleases."

"I acknowledge, however," said Geneviève, "I have been very desirous to see this poor woman."

"Let us see," said Maurice, anxious to gratify all the wishes of Geneviève; "have you really such an inclination? Then only say the word. I agree with the Citizen Morand that the Republic is a fairy; but I, in quality of municipal, am somewhat of a wizard."

"Could you procure me a sight of the queen, you, Monsieur?" cried Geneviève.

"Certainly, I can."

"And how?" demanded Morand, exchanging a rapid glance with Geneviève, which escaped the notice of the young man.

"Nothing more simple," said Maurice. "There are certainly some municipals of whom they are distrustful; but as for me, I have given sufficient evidence of my devotion to the cause of liberty to render me above all suspicion. Besides, admittance to the Temple depends conjointly on the municipals and the chiefs of the post. Now, the chief of the post is, just at this moment, my friend Lorin, who appears to me to be called indubitably to replace General Santerre, seeing that in three months he has risen from the rank of corporal to that of adjutant-major. Well, come and see me at the

Temple the day I shall be on guard, — that is to say, next Thursday."

"Well," said Morand, "I hope now your wishes will be gratified. There is the whole matter arranged."

"Oh! no, no," said Geneviève; "indeed, I would not have it thus."

"And wherefore not?" said Maurice, who only anticipated in this visit to the Temple an opportunity of seeing Geneviève on a day when he had expected to be deprived of this happiness.

"Because," answered Geneviève, "it might perhaps, dear Maurice, expose you to some unpleasant dispute; and if anything were to happen to you through gratifying a whim of mine, I should never, while I lived, forgive myself."

"You have spoken wisely, Geneviève," said Morand. "Suspicion is at present very rife; the best patriots even are now suspected. Renounce this project, which, as you say, is after all a mere caprice of curiosity."

"They will say that you are envious, Morand, and that not having yourself seen either king or queen, you do not wish others to do so. Come, to end all discussion, join the party."

"I! good faith! No."

"It is then no longer the Citizen Dixmer who wishes to visit the Temple; it is I who entreat both her and you to come there, to divert a poor prisoner. For the great door once closed upon me, I remain for twenty-four hours as much a prisoner as the king would be, or a prince of the blood." And pressing between his own feet the foot of Geneviève, "Come then," said he, "I entreat you!"

"What do you say, Morand," said Geneviève, "will you come with me?"

"It will be losing a day," said Morand, "and will retard by just so long the time when I expect to retire from business."

"Then I shall not go," said Geneviève.

"But why?" demanded Morand.

"Because I cannot depend upon my husband to escort me; and if you will not accompany me — you, a respectable man, thirty-eight years of age — I have not the hardihood to encounter alone all the chasseurs, artillerymen, and grenadiers, requesting to speak to one of the municipals only three or four years older than myself."

"Then," said Morand, "since you deem my presence indispensable, Citizeness —"

"Come! come! learned Citizen, be as gallant as if you were simply an ordinary man, and sacrifice half a day to the wife of your friend," said Maurice.

"Well, let it be so," said Morand.

"Now," said Maurice, "I only require one thing from you, — that is, discretion. Visiting the Temple is considered a suspicious proceeding, and should any accident occur in consequence, we should all be guillotined. The Jacobins do not jest. *Peste!* you see how they have treated the Girondins."

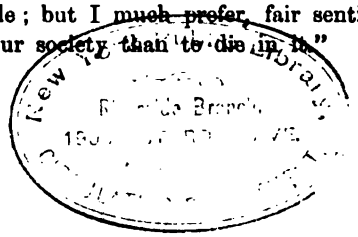
"The devil!" said Morand, "this observation of the Citizen Maurice requires consideration. This would be a sort of retiring from business that would not suit me at all."

"Did you not hear," said Geneviève, smiling, "that the Citizen Maurice said *all?*"

"Well, what of that? All?"

"All together."

"Yes, without doubt," said Morand, "company is very agreeable; but I much prefer, fair sentimentalist, to live in your society than to die in it."



"What the devil was I thinking of," said Maurice to himself, "when I imagined this man loved Geneviève?"

"Then it is all settled," said Geneviève. "I address myself to you, Morand, thoughtful, absent man that you are, — remember it is on Thursday next; so do not on the Wednesday evening commence some chemical experiment that will occupy your time and attention for the next twenty-four hours, as very frequently happens."

"You may be perfectly easy on that point," said Morand. "Besides, you can remind me."

Geneviève then rose from table, and Maurice followed her example. Morand was about to leave also, and perhaps to follow them, when one of the workmen brought the chemist a small vial containing some liquid which instantly engrossed all his attention.

"Let us make haste," said Maurice, drawing away Geneviève.

"Oh, be assured," said she, "he will remain there for an hour at the very least."

And the young woman allowed him to take her hand, which he tenderly pressed between his own. She felt remorse for her treachery, and tried to compensate for it by her kindness.

"Do you see," said she to Maurice, crossing the garden and showing him the carnations, which had been removed into the air with the hope of reviving them, — "do you see my flowers are all dead?"

"What killed them?" said Maurice; "your neglect? Poor carnations!"

"It was not my neglect, but your desertion, kind sir."

"They required, my little Geneviève, some water, that was all; besides, my absence should have left you plenty of time."

"Ah!" said Geneviève, "if flowers were watered with

tears, the poor carnations, as you call them, would not have died."

Maurice threw his arms round Geneviève, and drawing her to him, before she had time to prevent him, pressed his lips upon the half-smiling, half-languishing eye, now fixed upon the drooping, dying flowers.

Geneviève felt so much self-reproach it made her lenient to others.

Dixmer returned home late, and on his return found Morand, Maurice, and Geneviève talking botany in the garden.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FLOWER-GIRL.

At length the anticipated Thursday, the day of Maurice's guard, arrived. It was now the month of June. The sky was of a deep and cloudless blue, and against this sheet of blue rose the heavy white mass of new houses. The coming of the dreadful dog-star was already foreseen, — that dog represented by the ancients as thirsting with an unquenchable thirst, and which, to borrow the phraseology of the plebeian Parisians, licked the pavement very dry. Paris was clean as a carpet, and perfumes filled the air, mounting from the trees, emanating from the flowers, circulating and intoxicating with joy, as if to render the inhabitants of the capital forgetful for a few moments of that vapor of blood which rose without intermission from the pavement of their streets.

It was Maurice's duty to enter the Temple at nine o'clock; his two colleagues were Mercevault and Agricola. At eight o'clock he was in the old Rue Saint Jacques, in grand costume as citizen municipal, — that is to say, with a tricolored scarf tightly fastened round his lithe, muscular frame. He as usual rode there on horseback, and on his route won the sincere approbation, admiration, and eulogiums of the fair patriots who saw him pass. Geneviève was already prepared; she wore a simple muslin dress, a species of light taffeta mantle, and a small bonnet ornamented with the tricolored cockade. Thus attired, she was of dazzling beauty.

Morand, who, as we have seen, had been earnestly solicited to accompany them, had, no doubt for fear of being mistaken for an aristocrat, attired himself in his usual costume, — half-burgess, half-artisan. He had just entered, and his countenance betrayed great fatigue; he said he had been at work all night, in order to complete some urgent business.

Dixmer had gone out immediately on the return of his friend Morand.

"Well," demanded Geneviève, "what have you decided on, Maurice; and how are we to see the queen?"

"Listen," said Maurice, "I have arranged everything. I shall arrive at the Temple with you, and then introduce you to my friend Lorin, who commands the guard; I then take my post, and on the first opportunity will come for you."

"But," demanded Morand, "where are we to see the prisoners, and how are we to see them?"

"At either their breakfast or their dinner, if that will suit you, through the glazed partition of the municipals."

"Perfectly," said Morand.

Maurice then saw Morand approach a cupboard at the farther end of the *salle-à-manger*, and drink hastily a glass of pure wine, which rather surprised him, as Morand was usually very abstemious, his strongest beverage being water merely colored with wine.

Geneviève saw that Maurice regarded him with astonishment.

"Only imagine," said she, "he must be half-dead with fatigue; he has taken nothing since yesterday morning"

"Did he not dine here?" asked Maurice.

"No; he was trying some experiments in the city."

Geneviève took a useless precaution with respect to Maurice, since lover-like he was an egotist, and had merely

bestowed upon the action of Morand that superficial attention which an amorous man accords to everything except the woman whom he loves.

To his glass of wine Morand added a crust of bread, which he hastily swallowed.

"And now," said he, "dear Citizen Maurice, I am quite ready; when you choose we will depart."

Maurice, who was stripping the decayed petals from one of the dead carnations he had plucked in passing, now offered his arm to Geneviève, saying, —

"Let us start."

On their way Maurice felt so happy that he could scarcely contain himself; he would have uttered cries of joy had he not restrained his emotion. What could he desire more? Not only had he acquired the certainty that she did not love Morand, but also the hope that he possessed her affection. The glorious sun shone upon the world, the arm of Geneviève was reposing within his own, while the public criers, shouting at the top of their voices the triumph of the Jacobins and the defeat of Brissot and his party, announced that the country was saved.

There are truly moments in life when the heart of man seems too small to contain the joy or grief concentrated there.

"Oh, what a lovely day!" exclaimed Morand.

Maurice turned round in surprise. This was the first burst of feeling he had ever heard issue from the lips of this singularly reserved and absent man.

"Oh, yes; it is indeed lovely," said Geneviève, pressing closer the arm of Maurice; "would that it may continue till evening pure and cloudless as it is now!"

Maurice applied these words to himself, and his happiness redoubled each moment.

Morand at the same time regarded Geneviève through

his green spectacles with a peculiar, grateful expression. Perhaps he also applied her wish to himself.

They thus crossed the Petit Pont, the Rue de la Juiverie, and the Bridge Notre Dame; they then proceeded to the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, the Rue Barre-du-Bec, and the Rue Sainte Avoie. As they progressed, Maurice's step became more and more elastic, while on the contrary those of his male and female companions waxed slower and slower.

They had reached the corner of the Rue des Vieilles-Audriettes, when all at once a flower-girl impeded their passage, by offering them her basket filled with flowers.

"Oh, what magnificent carnations!" cried Maurice.

"Oh, yes, very beautiful!" said Geneviève; "it seems the cultivator of these had no pre-occupation to distress him, for they are not withered and dead."

This speech sank deep into the heart of the young man.

"Ah! my brave Municipal," said the flower-girl, "purchase a bouquet for the pretty citizen. She is dressed in white; look at these superb crimson carnations; white and purple look well together. She will place the bouquet upon her heart, and as her heart is near to your blue coat, you will have there the national colors."

The flower-girl was young and pretty; her compliment was well-turned and well-chosen, for had it been made expressly for that occasion, it could not have better applied to the circumstances. Besides, the flowers were almost symbolical; they were similar to those now dead.

"I will purchase some," said Maurice, "since they are carnations; all other flowers I detest."

"Ah, Maurice," said Geneviève, "it is useless, we have so many of them in the garden."

But although her lips uttered the refusal, her eyes expressed a longing desire to possess them.

Maurice selected the most beautiful of the bouquets. It was the one the pretty flower-girl had presented to him.

It consisted of twenty deep red carnations, emitting an odor at once sweet and pungent; in the centre, towering above the rest, rose a magnificent carnation.

"Here," said Maurice to the seller, throwing on her basket a bill of five francs, "that is for you."

"Thanks, my brave Municipal," said the flower-girl, "a thousand thanks."

And she went toward another couple, trusting the day commenced thus auspiciously would so continue till its close. During this apparently simple scene, which had only occupied a few seconds at most, Morand seemed scarcely able to support himself, and wiped the perspiration from his pallid brow, while Geneviève also turned pale and trembled. She took the nosegay which Maurice presented to her, and clasping it in her lovely hand, held it to her face, less to inhale the odor than to conceal her emotion.

The remainder of the journey was pleasant, at least so far as concerned Maurice. As for Geneviève, her gayety seemed affected, and Morand evinced his enjoyment in a fashion peculiar to himself, — that is to say, in smothered sighs or startling bursts of laughter, and occasionally uttering some formidable witticisms which fell upon the passers-by like sparks of fire.

At nine o'clock they reached the Temple.

Santerre called over the municipals.

"I am here," said Maurice, leaving Geneviève under the care of Morand.

"Welcome," said Santerre, holding out his hand to the young man.

Maurice took care not to refuse the hand thus offered

to him. The friendship of Santerre was certainly most valuable at this epoch. At sight of this man who had commanded the famous rolling of drums, Geneviève shuddered, and Morand turned pale.

"Who is this lovely citizeness?" demanded Santerre of Maurice, "and what does she here?"

"She is the wife of the brave Citizen Dixmer; you have heard this excellent patriot spoken of, Citizen General?"

"Yes, yes," replied Santerre; "the chief of a tannery, captain of chasseurs of the legion Victor."

"The same."

"Good! good! My faith, she is pretty. And this ugly fellow who has given her his arm?"

"That is the Citizen Morand, her husband's partner, and chasseur in Dixmer's company."

Santerre approached Geneviève.

"Good-day, Citizeness," said he.

Geneviève made an effort.

"Good-day, Citizen General," replied she, smiling.

Santerre felt flattered by both title and smile.

"And what brings you here, fair patriot?" continued Santerre.

"The citizeness," replied Maurice, "has never seen Widow Capet, and would like to see her."

"Yes," said Santerre, "before —" and he made an atrocious gesture.

"Precisely," replied Maurice, coldly.

"Very well," said Santerre, "only mind they are not seen entering the keep: it would be a bad example; in other respects, do as you think fit."

Santerre again shook hands with Maurice, made an inclination of his head to Geneviève in a friendly and protecting manner, and went to attend to his other duties.

After a great many evolutions of gendarmes and chasseurs, after some manœuvring with cannon, the heavy reverberations of which, it was considered, carried to the environs a salutary admonition, Maurice gave Geneviève his arm, and followed closely by Morand, advanced toward the post, at the door of which Lorin was vociferating loudly, commanding the manœuvres of his battalion.

"Good!" cried he, "why there is Maurice; *peste!* with a female too who appears to me rather agreeable. Does the sly rascal wish to bring her into competition with my Goddess Reason? If it were so, poor Arthémise!"

"Hallo! Citizen Adjutant," said the captain.

"Ah! that's right; attention!" said Lorin; "file to the left, left — Good-day, Maurice; not so quickly —"

The drums rolled, the company dispersed to their respective places, and when each was at his post, Lorin hastened to exchange compliments with his friend. Maurice presented Lorin to Geneviève and Morand. Then an explanation commenced as to the purport of their visit.

"Yes, I understand," said Lorin; "you wish your friends to enter the keep; that is easily managed. I will go directly and station the sentinels, then I will order them to admit you and your friends."

In ten minutes afterward Geneviève and Morand entered behind the three municipals, and placed themselves behind the glazed partition.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CRIMSON CARNATION.

THE queen had just risen. Having been indisposed for two or three days, she had remained in bed longer than usual; but having heard from her sister that there had been a splendid sunrise, she made an effort to quit her couch, and that she might be enabled to breathe the pure air with her daughter, had requested permission to walk on the platform, which had been granted her without the slightest difficulty.

She had also been induced to act thus from another cause. Once, and it is true once only, from the height of the tower she had seen the dauphin playing in the garden. But at the first signal of recognition between the mother and child, Simon interfered, and compelled the boy to retire immediately.

Nevertheless, she had seen him; that was a great source of happiness to her. True, the poor little prisoner was very pale and much changed. Then he was dressed as a child of the people, in a blouse and coarse trousers. But his beautiful fair waving curls were still left him, forming around him a glory which God no doubt intended the infant martyr to retain in heaven.

If she could only see him once again, oh, what a cordial to the heart of the unhappy mother!

There was yet another motive.

"My sister," Madame Elizabeth had said to her, "you know we found in the corridor a straw standing upright

in a corner of the wall. In the language of our signs this desires us to be watchful, as a friend is coming near us."

"That is true," replied the queen; who, regarding her sister and child with pity, would not on their account permit herself to despair of their ultimate safety.

The duties of the service accomplished, Maurice was then highest in authority in the keep of the Temple, since chance had elected him as guard during the day, and the other municipals, Agricola and Mercevault, as guards during the night.

The municipals had left, after laying their *procès-verbal* before the Council of the Temple.

"Ah, Citizen Municipal," said the woman Tison, coming forward to salute Maurice, "you bring company, then, to see our caged pigeons? It is only I who am condemned no more to see my poor Sophie."

"They are friends of mine," said Maurice, "who have never yet seen the Widow Capet."

"Ah! well, they will see admirably behind the partition."

"Assuredly," said Morand.

"Only," said Geneviève, "we shall seem to be actuated by that cruel curiosity which induces some persons to mock the misery of unfortunate prisoners from the outside of an iron grating."

"Ah! then why not take your friends to the tower walk, since the woman Capet will take an airing there to-day with her sister and her daughter; for they have left her a daughter, while I who am not guilty, have been deprived of mine. Oh, these aristocrats! it will always be the case; let us do what we will, favor is always shown to them, Citizen Maurice."

"But they have taken from her her son," replied he.

"Ah! if I had a son," murmured the female jailer, "I should lament my daughter less."

Geneviève during this time had exchanged looks with Morand several times.

"*Mon ami*," said the young woman to Maurice, "the citizen is in the right. If you could by any means place me in the way of Marie Antoinette, it would be less repugnant to my feelings than gazing at her here. It seems to me that this manner of viewing people is at once humiliating both to them and to us."

"Kind Geneviève," said Maurice, "you possess true delicacy of mind."

"Egad! Citizen," said one of Maurice's colleagues who was at that moment breakfasting in the antechamber on bread and sausages, "if you were the prisoner, and Capet's wife felt curiosity to see you, she would not be so very particular about the indulgence of her fancy, — the jade!"

Geneviève, with a movement quicker than lightning, threw a rapid glance toward Morand, to note the effect of these words upon him. In effect, Morand quivered, a strange phosphorescent light gleamed from under his eyelids, and his hands were clinched for an instant; but all this was so momentary that it passed unperceived.

"What is the name of this municipal?" asked she of Maurice.

"It is the Citizen Mercevault," replied the young man; and then added, as if to apologize for his coarseness, "a stone-cutter."

Mercevault heard it, and cast a sidelong glance at Maurice.

"Come! come!" said the woman Tison; "finish your sausage and your half-bottle, that I may clear the table."

"It is not the fault of the Austrian if I finish them now," grumbled the municipal; "for if she could have murdered me on the 10th of August she would have done so; thus the day when she 'sneezes in the sack' I shall be in the first rank, firm at my post."

Morand turned as pale as death.

"Come! Citizen Maurice," said Geneviève, "let us go where you promised to take us; here it seems as if I were a prisoner. I feel suffocated."

Maurice conducted Geneviève and Morand out, when the sentinels, previously instructed by Lorin, allowed them to pass without any difficulty. They installed themselves in a little passage on the upper story, so that the moment when the queen, Madame Royale, or Madame Elizabeth ascended to the gallery, these august personages could not do otherwise than pass before them.

As the promenade was fixed for ten o'clock, and they had only a few minutes to wait, Maurice not only did not quit his friends, but further, in order that the slightest suspicion might not be excited by this rather illegal proceeding, having met Agricola, he took that municipal with him.

It struck ten.

"Open!" cried a voice from the base of the tower, which Maurice knew to be that of General Santerre.

Immediately the guard assumed arms and closed the iron gratings; the sentinels also presented arms. There was then heard in all the court a confused noise of iron, stones, and footsteps, which vividly impressed both Morand and Geneviève, for Maurice observed them both turn pale.

"All these precautions to guard three poor women," murmured Geneviève.

"Yes," said Morand, endeavoring to smile; "if those who tempt them to escape were now here, and in our place saw what we see, it would disgust them with their trade."

"In fact," continued Geneviève, "I begin to think they will never escape."

"I hope they never will," said Maurice, inclining over the staircase as he spoke.

"Attention," cried he; "here are the prisoners."

"Name them to me," said Geneviève, "for I do not know any of them."

"The first two who are ascending are the sister and daughter of Capet. The last one, preceded by a little dog, is Marie Antoinette."

Geneviève made a step forward. Morand, on the contrary, instead of looking at them, pressed himself close against the wall, his lips more livid and earthy than the stones of the keep.

Geneviève, with her white robe and bright pure eyes, appeared like an angel awaiting the prisoners to cheer them on their dark and dreary road, and to administer in passing a ray of comfort to their desolate and blighted hearts.

Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale pursued their way, having only thrown a glance of astonishment at the strangers. No doubt the former imagined they were those whom the signals announced, for turning round quickly to Madame Royale, she pressed her hand, and while so doing, dropped her handkerchief, as if to inform the queen.

"Pay attention, my sister," said she; "I have dropped my handkerchief."

And she passed on with the young princess.

The queen, with panting breath accompanied with a

bouquet may come perhaps from one you love. I will not deprive you of it."

Geneviève blushed, and at this blush the queen smiled.

"Move on! Citizen Capet," said Agricola, "you must continue your route."

The queen bowed, and ascended the steps, but before she disappeared, turned around and murmured, —

"How sweet these carnations smell! and what a beautiful young lady!"

"She has not seen me," murmured Morand, who, almost kneeling in the shade of the corridor, had quite escaped the notice of the queen.

"But you had a good view of her, had you not, Morand? Had not you, Geneviève?" said Maurice, doubly happy, first from the sight he had procured his friends, and also that he had afforded ever so slight a gratification to the unhappy prisoner.

"Oh, yes, yes!" said Geneviève; "I saw her very well, and were I to live for a thousand years, I should never forget her."

"And what do you think of her?"

"She is charming."

"And you, Morand."

Morand clasped his hands, but made no reply.

"Tell me," said Maurice, laughing, in a whisper to Geneviève, "is it the queen of whom Morand is enamoured?"

Geneviève started, but recovering herself instantly, replied smilingly, —

"It really looks like it."

"You have not yet told me what you think of her, Morand," persisted Maurice.

"I thought her very pale," replied he.

Maurice retook the arm of Geneviève, to descend toward the court. In the dark staircase it seemed to him that Geneviève kissed his hand.

"Ha! what does that mean, Geneviève?"

"It means, Maurice, that I shall never forget that to gratify a whim of mine you have risked your life."

"Oh!" said Maurice, "what exaggeration, Geneviève! Between you and me, you well know that gratitude is not the sentiment I wish to inspire you with."

Geneviève pressed his arm softly.

Morand followed with faltering steps.

When they reached the court, Lorin came and identified the two visitors, showing them to the gate.

Before leaving the Temple, Geneviève made Maurice promise to dine the next day in the old Rue Saint Jacques.

CHAPTER XXII.

SIMON THE CENSOR.

When Maurice returned to his post, in a state of transcendent happiness, he found Tison's wife weeping.

"What have they done to you now, mother?" asked Maurice.

"All this makes me furious," replied the female jailer.

"Why?"

"Because there is nothing but injustice for poor people in this world."

"But how?"

"You are rich, you are a bourgeois, you come here only for a day, and they permit pretty women to visit you here, who present bouquets to the Austrian; while I who nestle everlastingly in this dove-cot am not allowed to see my poor Sophie."

Maurice took her hand, and slipped into it a bill of ten francs.

"There, good woman, take that, and do not despair. Goodness! the Austrian will not last forever."

"Ten francs," said the female jailer, "that is kind of you; but I would rather have even a curl-paper from my poor girl's hair."

As she finished these words, Simon, who was then coming up, heard them, and saw the female jailer put in her pocket the bill Maurice had given her.

We will mention what sort of a temper Simon was in.

He came from the court where he had encountered Lorin. Now, a decided antipathy existed between these two men.

This hatred was less induced by the violent scenes with which our readers are already familiar than by difference of race, an everlasting source of detestation, which, however mysterious it may at first appear, is easily explained.

Simon was hideous, Lorin handsome; Simon was vulgar, Lorin the very opposite; Simon was a Republican bully, Lorin one of those ardent patriots who had sacrificed everything to the Revolution; and then, if they had on a former occasion come to blows, Simon instinctively felt that the fist of the fop, no less effectually than that of Maurice, would have inflicted upon him a plebeian punishment.

Simon on perceiving Lorin, stopped short, and turned pale.

"It is still this battalion that mounts guard," growled he.

"Well," said a gendarme who overheard this apostrophe, "it is as good as another, it seems to me."

Simon drew a pencil from his pocket, and pretended to note down something on a piece of paper almost as black as his hands.

"Ah!" said Lorin, "you know how to write then, Simon, since you are tutor to young Capet? Look, citizens, upon my honor he takes notes; he is Simon the Censor."

A universal shout of laughter proceeded from the ranks of the young National Guards, almost all men of education, at the ridiculous title bestowed upon the wretched cobbler.

"Very well, very well," said he, grinding his teeth,

and turning white with rage; "they say you have permitted strangers to enter the keep, and that without the consent of the Commune. Very well, I am going to draw out the *procès-verbal* by the municipal."

"He at least knows how to write," said Lorin; "it is Maurice, Maurice with the Iron Hand; don't you know him?"

At this moment Morand and Geneviève went out.

On seeing this, Simon rushed into the keep, at the very moment, as we have said, when Maurice, by way of consoling her, presented the woman Tison with the bill of ten francs.

Maurice paid no attention to the presence of this miserable wretch, whom by a natural instinct he always avoided if he by any chance encountered him, regarding him in the light of a disgusting and venomous reptile.

"Ah, well!" said Simon to Tison's wife, who was wiping her eyes with her apron; "so you wish to bring yourself to the guillotine, Citizen?"

"I!" said the woman, "what put such a thought into your head?"

"Why, because you receive money from the municipal for allowing aristocrats entrance to the Austrian."

"I!" said the woman Tison; "be silent, you are mad!"

"This shall be entered in the *procès-verbal*," said Simon, emphatically.

"Come, now, they are friends of the Municipal Maurice, one of the best patriots that ever existed."

"Conspirators, I tell you. Besides, the Commune shall be informed; it will judge for itself."

"What! you mean to lodge information about me then, spy of the police!"

"Exactly so, if you do not lodge information yourself."

"Information about what? About what do you wish me to lodge information?"

"About what has happened."

"But nothing has happened."

"Where were these aristocrats?"

"There, upon the staircase."

"When Capet's wife ascended the stairs?"

"Yes."

"And they spoke to her?"

"They exchanged two words."

"Two words! Besides, there is a perfume of the aristocrat here."

"It is the scent of carnations."

"Carnations! what carnations?"

"Why, the citizen had a bunch of them, which perfumed the whole place."

"What citizen?"

"The one who saw the queen pass."

"Oh, the thing is clear; you say *the queen!* Ma'am Tison; this consorting with aristocrats will be your ruin! Ah, what is this I am treading upon?" continued Simon, stooping down.

"Ah!" said the woman Tison, "it is a flower, a carnation; it must have fallen from the hand of the Citizeness Dixmer, when Marie Antoinette took one from her bouquet."

"The woman Capet took a flower from the Citizen Dixmer's bouquet?" said Simon.

"Yes; and it was I who gave her the bouquet," said Maurice, in a loud and menacing tone, who had been for some moments listening to this colloquy, and whose patience was nearly exhausted.

"It is all very well, it is all very well; one sees what one sees, and one knows what one says," growled Simon,

who still held in his hand the carnation crushed by his huge foot.

"And I also know one thing," replied Maurice, "which I am now going to tell you; it is that you have nothing whatever to do in this keep, and that your honorable post of hangman is down there with the little Capet, whom I would, for your own sake, recommend you not to chastise to-day, as I am here to defend him."

"Do you threaten me? Do you call me hangman?" cried Simon, crushing the flower in his hand. "Ah! we shall see if it is permitted these aristocrats — why, what is this?"

"What?" asked Maurice.

"That I feel in this carnation? Ah! ah!"

The eyes of Maurice were transfixed with astonishment as Simon drew from the calyx of the flower a small paper, rolled with the most exquisite care, which had been artistically introduced into the centre of the clustering leaves.

"My God!" said Maurice, "what can this mean?"

"We shall know, we shall very soon know," said Simon, approaching the window. "Ah! you and your friend Lorin told me I did not know how to read. Well! you shall see."

Lorin had calumniated Simon; he could read all kinds of print, and manuscript also when sufficiently large. But the writing in the little billet was so minute that Simon was obliged to have recourse to his spectacles. He consequently placed it on the window, while he proceeded to take an inventory of the contents of his pockets; but while thus engaged, the Citizen Agricola opened the door of the antechamber exactly facing the little window, thereby causing a current of air which blew away the little paper, light as a feather from a bird's wing, so that

when Simon, after a moment's exploration, had discovered his spectacles, placed them on his nose, and turned himself round, his labor was lost, — the paper had disappeared.

"There was a paper here," roared Simon, crimson with rage and disappointment, — "there was a paper here. Look to yourself, Citizen Municipal, for it must and shall be found."

And he descended precipitately, leaving Maurice in a state of stupefaction.

Ten minutes afterward three members of the Commune entered the keep. The queen was still upon the platform, and strict orders had been issued that she should be kept in total ignorance of all that had just occurred. The members of the Commune desired to be conducted to her presence.

The first object which met their view was the crimson carnation, which she still held in her hand. They regarded her with surprise, and approaching her, —

"Give us this flower," said the president of the deputation. The queen, who had not expected this intrusion, started and hesitated.

"Surrender your flower, Madame," said Maurice, in a sort of alarm, "I entreat you."

The queen tendered them the carnation. The president took it and retired, followed by his colleagues, into a neighboring apartment to make an examination, and draw up the *procès-verbal*.

They opened the flower — it was empty.

Maurice breathed afresh.

"Wait a moment," said one of the members, "the heart of the carnation has been removed. The calyx is empty, it is true, but in this calyx most unquestionably a letter has been concealed."

"I am quite ready and willing," said Maurice, "to furnish all necessary explanation; but first of all, I request to be arrested."

"We shall make a minute of your proposal, but shall not act upon it," said the president. "You are known as a stanch patriot, Citizen Lindey."

"And I will answer with my life for the friends I had the imprudence to bring with me."

"Answer for no one," replied the procurator.

A tremendous hubbub was now heard in the court. It was Simon, who having long and vainly sought for the little billet wafted away by the wind, went to Santerre and informed him that an attempt had been made to carry off the queen, with all the accessories which the powers of his excited imagination could lend to such an event. Santerre was in great haste; he investigated the Temple, and changed the guard, to the great disgust of Lorin, who stoutly protested against this offence offered to his battalion.

"Ah! vile cobbler," said he to Simon, menacing him with his sabre, "I have you to thank for this pleasantry; but only wait a little, and I will pay you back in your own coin."

"I think rather that the entire nation will pay you," said the shoemaker, rubbing his hands.

"Citizen Maurice," said Santerre, "hold yourself at the disposal of the Commune, who will examine you."

"I await your orders, Commandant; but I have already said that I desire to be arrested, and I repeat my request."

"Wait, wait," murmured Simon, with a malicious smile; "since you are so bent upon it, we shall try to settle that little matter for you," and he went to find the woman Tison.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ARTHÉMISE.

THEY searched during the whole day in the court, in the garden and its environs, for the little billet which had caused all this tumult, and which they no longer doubted contained the whole plot.

They interrogated the queen, after having separated her from her daughter and sister, but elicited nothing more from her than that she had, on the staircase, encountered a young woman carrying a bouquet, and had drawn a single flower from the centre.

Moreover, she would not have plucked this flower had she not first obtained the consent of the Municipal Maurice.

She had nothing more to tell. This was the truth in all its force and simplicity.

This was all reported to Maurice when his turn came to be questioned, and he declared that the deposition of the queen was quite correct.

"But," said the president, "there was then a plot."

"Impossible," said Maurice; "I was dining at Madame Dixmer's, and proposed that she should see the prisoners, hearing her remark she had never done so; but neither the day nor the manner of so doing was arranged."

"But the flowers were purchased," said the president; "the bouquet had been made beforehand."

"Not at all; I myself purchased these flowers from a flower-girl, who offered them to us at the corner of the Rue des Vieilles-Audriettes."

"But at least this flower-girl presented the bouquet to you?"

"No, Citizen; I selected it myself from ten or twelve others. Certainly, I purchased the most beautiful."

"But was there a possibility of secreting this billet on your road to the tower?"

"Impossible, Citizen. I never left Madame Dixmer's side for a moment, and to perform the operation named on each flower, — for remark that every flower, according to Simon's account, must have contained a like billet, — would at least occupy half a day or more."

"But, in short, could not two prepared billets have been placed in the flowers?"

"The prisoner in my presence took one at random, after having declined the rest."

"Then, in your opinion, Citizen Lindey, there was not a plot at all?"

"Oh, there must have been a plot!" replied Maurice, "and I am the first not only to believe but to affirm it; my friends, however, were not concerned in it. Nevertheless, as the nation must necessarily be alarmed, I offer security by surrendering myself prisoner."

"Not at all," said Santerre; "should we act thus with tried friends like you? If you surrender yourself prisoner to answer for your friends, I surrender myself prisoner to answer for you. The thing is simple. There is no positive accusation. No one will know what has passed. Let us henceforth act with redoubled vigilance, — you especially, — and we shall succeed in probing this matter to the bottom, and at the same time avoid publicity."

"Thanks, Commandant," said Maurice; "but I shall answer as you would answer were you in my place. We must not stop here; we must discover the flower girl."

"The flower-girl is far away, but be perfectly easy on that point; she shall be sought for. As for you, watch your friends, while I will guard the prison correspondence."

No one had thought of Simon, but he had formed his own project.

He arrived toward the conclusion of the sitting, and learned the decision of the Commune.

"Ah! then all that is needed is a formal accusation," said he, "to make sure work. Wait five minutes and I will lay one before you."

"What is it?" said the president.

"It is," said Simon, "the courageous Citizeness Tison who accuses of secret practices that partisan of the aristocracy, Maurice, and denounces the intrigues of another equally false patriot, one of his friends named Lorin."

"Take care, take care, Simon; your zeal for the nation perhaps misleads you. Maurice and Lorin are tried patriots."

"That will be seen at the tribunal," replied Simon.

"Consider well, Simon; this will be a disgraceful proceeding in the sight of all true patriots."

"Disgraceful or not, what is that to me? Do I dread disgrace? We shall at least learn the whole truth about traitors."

"Then you persist in lodging an accusation in the name of the woman Tison?"

"I will accuse them myself this very night to the Cordeliers, and you too, Citizen President, if you do not at once command the arrest of that traitor Maurice.

"Well, so be it," said the president, who, after the manner of those wretched times, trembled before those who clamored the loudest; "he shall be arrested."

While this decision was forming against him, Maurice had returned to the Temple, where the following billet awaited him, —

Our guard being violently broken up, I shall not be able, in all probability, to see you before to-morrow morning. Come then and breakfast with me ; during that meal you shall give me a true and particular account of the plots and conspiracies discovered by Simon.

A pink the culprit was, —
So honest Simon does depose ;
But I shall information seek
This morning from a lovely rose.

And to-morrow, in my turn, I shall lay before you all Arthémise's answers to my questions.

Yours faithfully,

LORIN.

Maurice replied, —

There is nothing new ; so sleep in peace to-night, and breakfast without me to-morrow, as, on reviewing the incidents of the day, I find I shall not, in all probability, be able to leave till noon.

I should like to be a zephyr to waft a kiss to the rose of which you speak.

I give you leave to whistle at my prose as much as I do at your verse.

Yours faithfully,

MAURICE.

P. S. For the rest, I believe the conspiracy was only a false alarm, after all.

Lorin had indeed left at one o'clock with the whole of his battalion, thanks to the brutal conduct of the shoemaker ; he however consoled himself with a quatrain, and went to visit Arthémise.

Arthémise was delighted to see Lorin. The weather, as we have said, was magnificent; she therefore proposed a walk along the quay, to which Lorin of course assented. They had walked some distance, discoursing on politics, Lorin recounting his expulsion from the Temple and vainly endeavoring to divine the cause, when, on reaching the vicinity of Rue des Barres, they perceived a flower-girl, who, like themselves, was walking up the right bank of the Seine.

"Ah, Citizen Lorin!" said Arthémise, "I hope you are going to present me with a bouquet?"

"Two, if you wish it," said Lorin; and they both redoubled their speed to overtake the flower-girl, who walked at a rapid pace.

On arriving at the Bridge Marie, the young girl stopped, and leaning over the parapet, emptied the contents of her basket into the river.

The flowers separated, whirled round for an instant in the air, while the bouquets, dragged down by their weight, fell more quickly, till at last both flowers and bouquets floated upon the surface, following the course of the water.

"Stop!" said Arthémise, regarding the flower-girl thus strangely occupied; "it is said — but yes — but no — but if — ah! this is strange."

The flower-girl placed her finger on her lips, as if to entreat Arthémise to be silent, and disappeared.

"Who is this, then?" said Lorin; "do you know this mortal, goddess?"

"No; I fancied at first — but certainly I am deceived."

"She, however, made a sign to you," persisted Lorin.

"But why is she a flower-girl this morning?" said Arthémise to herself.

"You acknowledge, then, that you know her, Arthémise?" asked Lorin.

"Yes," replied Arthémise; "she is a flower-girl I sometimes deal with."

"At all events," said Lorin, "she has a strange method of disposing of her merchandise."

And both, after having looked for the last time at the flowers, which had already reached the wooden bridge and received a fresh impetus from the arm of the river passing under its arches, continued their route toward the Rapée, where they anticipated dining *tête-à-tête*.

This incident was forgotten for the moment; but as it was at least singular, and of rather a mysterious character, it vividly impressed Lorin's poetic imagination.

In the mean time, the accusation brought by Tison's wife against Maurice and Lorin caused a great tumult at the club of the Jacobins; and Maurice was informed at the Temple by the Commune that his safety was endangered by the public indignation. This was a recommendation to the young municipal to conceal himself if he were guilty; but with conscious rectitude Maurice remained at the Temple, where he was found at his post when they came to arrest him, and at the same time to interrogate him.

Remaining firm in his resolution not to endanger the safety of his friends, in whom he felt the most implicit confidence, Maurice was not the man to sacrifice himself by a ridiculous silence worthy of a hero of romance, and therefore demanded that the flower-girl should be arrested.

It was five o'clock in the evening when Lorin returned home, and heard, at the same moment, of the arrest of Maurice, and also of the demand made by him.

The flower-girl of the Bridge Marie instantly recurred to him like a sudden revelation. This singular individual casting her flowers into the Seine; the coincidence of place; the half admission of Arthémise, — all these facts combined convinced him that this was the solution of the mystery demanded by Maurice.

He bounded from his chamber, flew rather than ran down four flights of stairs, and precipitated himself into the presence of the Goddess Reason, who was engaged in embroidering golden stars on a robe of blue gauze. It was her robe of divinity.

"A truce to the stars, sweetheart," said Lorin; "they have arrested Maurice this morning, and, in all human probability, this evening I shall share the same fate."

"Maurice arrested!"

"By Heaven, he is! In these times nothing is more common than the occurrence of such troubles; but they excite little attention because they come in troops, that is all. Almost all important matters originate in trifles. Never neglect trifles. Who was that flower-girl we met this morning, sweetheart?"

Arthémise started.

"What flower-girl?"

"The one who so recklessly cast her flowers into the Seine."

"Ah, my goodness!" said Arthémise; "is this circumstance, then, so serious that you return to question me so urgently about it?"

"So serious, sweetheart, that I entreat you to answer my question without loss of time."

"Dear Lorin, I cannot do so."

"Goddess, with you nothing is impossible."

"I am in honor bound to keep silence."

"And I am bound in honor to make you speak."

"But why do you insist upon it thus?"

"Why? Zounds! that Maurice may not have his throat cut!"

"Merciful Heavens! Maurice guillotined!" cried the young woman, much alarmed.

"Without speaking of myself; for to tell you the truth my head feels by no means secure upon my shoulders."

"Ah! No, no!" said Arthémise, "to speak would be the poor girl's utter ruin."

At this moment Lorin's official rushed into the apartment.

"Ah! Citizen," cried he, "save yourself! save yourself!"

"And why?" demanded Lorin.

"Because the gendarmes have arrived; and while they were forcing an entrance, I gained the next house by the roof, and hastened to prevent your return."

Arthémise uttered a heart-rending cry, for she truly loved Lorin.

"Arthémise," said Lorin, "do you really place the life of a flower-girl in comparison with that of Maurice and that of your lover? If so, I declare to you that I no longer regard you as the Goddess Reason, but shall proclaim you the Goddess Folly."

"Poor Héloïse!" exclaimed the ex-dancer of the Opera; "if I betray you, it is not my fault."

"Well done, my darling!" said Lorin, presenting a paper to Arthémise, "you have already favored me with her Christian name, oblige me now with her surname and address."

"Oh, write it! never, never!" cried Arthémise; "I would rather tell you."

"Tell me, then, and rest assured I shall not forget."

And Arthémise, in an agitated voice, gave the name and address of the pretended flower-girl to Lorin.

"She is called Héloïse Tison, and lives, Rue des Nonandières, No. 24."

At this name, Lorin uttered an exclamation, and fled. He had not reached the corner of the street when a letter was delivered to Arthémise. It only contained three lines, —

Not a word concerning me, dear friend ; the revelation of my name would infallibly ruin me. Wait till to-morrow. I quit Paris to-night.

Thine,

HÉLOÏSE.

"Oh, my God!" cried the future goddess, "if I could only have divined this I should have waited till to-morrow," and she rushed to the window to recall Lorin, if there was yet time ; but he had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

We have already said that in a few hours the news of this event had circulated through Paris. In short, there were at this epoch various indiscretions easy to comprehend on the part of a government of which the political schemes were made and unmade in the street.

The rumor gradually gained ground, till it at length reached the old Rue Saint Jacques, and two hours after the arrest of Maurice they heard of his detention.

Thanks to the activity of Simon, the details of the plot were quickly reported beyond the Temple; but as every one embellished the original according to his fancy, the truth was somewhat altered by the time it reached the master-tanner's. One said a poisoned flower had been conveyed to the queen, by means of which the Austrian would stupefy her guards, and thus be enabled to escape from the Temple; it was also said that certain suspicions were entertained of the fidelity of the battalion dismissed by Santerre on the preceding evening, — so that already several victims were consigned to the hatred of the people.

But the inhabitants of the old Rue Saint Jacques were not, of course, deceived as to the real nature of the event; and Morand on one side, and Dixmer on the other, went out immediately, leaving Geneviève a victim to the most violent despair.

If this misfortune had befallen Maurice, it was she who had been the sole cause of it. It was her hand that had conducted the young man blindfold to the entrance of the dungeon which now enclosed him, and which, in all human probability, he would quit only for the scaffold.

But under any circumstances Maurice should not lose his head on account of his devotion to her wishes. If Maurice were condemned, she would accuse herself before the tribunal, and would confess all. She would take all the responsibility upon herself, and at the expense of her life would save Maurice. And Geneviève, instead of feeling any fear of death, experienced, on the contrary, a melancholy happiness at the idea of dying for Maurice.

She loved the young man, she loved him more than was right in a woman who belonged not to herself; and to die would be for her the means of giving back to God her soul, pure and unspotted as she had received it from him.

On quitting the house, Dixmer and Morand separated, the former took the road to the Rue de la Corderie, the latter hastened to the Rue des Nonandières. Arriving at the end of the Bridge Marie, Morand perceived that crowd of idlers and common people which in Paris during or after the occurrence of anything remarkable collects at the place, as crows assemble on the field of battle.

At this sight Morand stopped short, a universal tremor shook his frame, and he leaned for support against the parapet.

At length, after a few seconds, he regained the almost miraculous power which under trying circumstances he exercised over his feelings, and mingling with the various groups, commenced his inquiries, and learned that a short time before they had taken from the Rue des Nonandières,

No. 24, a young woman, most certainly guilty of the crime of which she stood then accused, as they surprised her in the act of making these packets. Morand inquired before what club the poor girl would be interrogated, and found they had conducted her to the section Mère, where he immediately followed her.

The club was thronged, but by making free use of his elbows and fists, he succeeded in forcing an entrance. The first sight he encountered was the tall and noble figure of Maurice, standing haughtily in the place of the accused, and annihilating Simon by his looks.

"Yes, Citizens," cried Simon, who was concluding his accusation; "the Citizen Tison accuses the Citizen Lindey and the Citizen Lorin. The Citizen Lindey mentions a flower-girl, upon whom he endeavors to cast all the blame; but, as I told you before, the flower-girl will not be found, and that it is a vile plot formed by a body of aristocrats who toss back the ball from one to the other, like cowards as they are. You have seen, besides, that the Citizen Lorin had decamped when his presence was required; and he will return no more than the flower-girl."

"Then you have lied, Simon," cried a furious voice; "he will return, for he is here."

And Lorin strode into the hall.

"Room for me!" said he, pushing aside the spectators. "Room for me!" And he placed himself near Maurice.

The entrance of Lorin, so natural, and without affectation, yet combining all the freedom and strength inherent in the character of the young man, produced an immense effect upon the Tribunes, who instantly greeted him with cries of applause.

Maurice contented himself by smiling and holding out his hand to his friend, — the friend concerning whom he

had said to himself, "I shall not long stand alone at the bench of the accused."

The spectators gazed with visible interest on these two handsome young men whom the foul shoemaker of the Temple, like a demon envious of their youth and beauty, had accused.

He soon perceived the unfavorable impression he had made, and determined to strike the last blow.

"Citizens!" roared he; "I demand that the generous Citizen Tison should be heard; let her speak, and bring forward her accusation."

"Citizens," said Lorin, "I demand that the flower-girl who has just been arrested, and who no doubt will be brought before you, may be first heard."

"No, no," said Simon; "it is just some false evidence, — some partisan of the aristocrats. Besides, the woman Tison is most impatient to forward the means of justice."

Meanwhile Lorin took the opportunity to whisper to Maurice.

"Yes," cried the Tribunes; "the deposition of the woman Tison; let her testify!"

"Is the woman Tison in the hall?" demanded the president.

"Without doubt she is here," cried Simon. "Citizen Tison, answer for yourself."

"I am here, President; but if I depose, will they give me back my daughter?" said the female jailer.

"Your daughter has nothing at all to do with the affair with which we are at present engaged," said the president. "Make your deposition first, and then appeal to the Commune to restore your child."

"Do you hear?" said Simon; "the citizen president commands you to make your deposition. Do so at once!"

"A moment," said the president, turning toward Maurice, astonished at the calmness of a man generally so impetuous. "One moment. Citizen Municipal, have you nothing to say first?"

"No, Citizen President, — except that before Simon attached the words 'traitor and coward' to a man like myself, it would have been better to have waited till he was more correctly informed."

"You say that? you say that?" replied Simon, with the sneering accent peculiar to the plebeian Parisian.

"I say, Simon," replied Maurice, with more of sorrow than anger, "that you will be most cruelly punished immediately, when you see what is about to happen."

"What is about to happen, I should like to know?" demanded Simon.

"Citizen President," said Maurice, without deigning to notice the question of his hideous accuser, "I unite with my friend Lorin in demanding that the young girl who has just been arrested may be heard before this poor woman is compelled to speak, who, no doubt, has been prompted to this deposition."

"Listen, Citizeness!" said Simon; "listen! They say down there that you are a false witness?"

"I a false witness!" cried the woman Tison. "You shall see; you shall see! Wait!"

"Citizen," said Maurice, "in pity desire this woman to remain silent."

"Ah! you are afraid," said Simon, — "you are afraid! Citizen President, I require the deposition of the woman Tison."

"Yes! yes! the deposition!" cried the Tribunes.

"Silence!" cried the president; "the Commune returns."

At this moment the sound of a carriage was heard outside, amid the noise of shouts and arms.

Simon turned uneasily toward the door.

"Quit the box," said the president to him; "you have nothing more to tell." Simon descended.

At this moment some gendarmes entered, with a crowd of curious idlers, which was soon driven back, and a woman was pushed toward the judgment-hall.

"Is it she?" whispered Lorin to Maurice.

"It is," replied Maurice. "Miserable woman, she is lost!"

"The flower-girl! the flower-girl!" murmured the Tribunes, whose curiosity was raised to the highest pitch. "Is this the flower-girl?"

"I demand, before everything else," roared Simon, "the deposition of the woman Tison. You commanded her to testify, President, and she has not yet done so."

The woman was recalled, and entered upon a dreadful and circumstantial deposition. The flower-girl, it was true, was alone criminal; but Maurice and Lorin were her accomplices.

This denunciation produced an incredible effect upon the public mind; and now, indeed, Simon was in the ascendant.

"Gendarmes," said the president, "bring forward the flower-girl."

"Oh, this is frightful!" said Maurice, concealing his face in his hands.

The flower-girl was called, and placed before the Tribune, exactly opposite to Tison's wife, whose testimony had convicted her of a capital crime.

She raised her veil.

"Héloïse!" cried the woman Tison; "my child. You here!"

"Yes, mother," replied the young woman, gently.

"And why do you enter between two gendarmes?"

"Because I am accused, mother."

"You! Accused, and by whom?" cried the woman, in anguish.

"By you, mother."

A frightful silence, like the precursor of death, fell suddenly upon the noisy assemblage, while the painful feeling excited by this horrible scene oppressed every heart.

"Her daughter," was whispered, as if by voices in the distance, — "her daughter! Unhappy woman!"

Maurice and Lorin regarded both the accuser and the accused with sentiments of deep commiseration, mingled with respectful pity for their unhappy fate.

Simon, anxious to witness the conclusion of this tragedy, in which he hoped both Maurice and Lorin would remain actors, endeavored to withdraw from the attention of the woman Tison, who gazed wildly around.

"What is your name, Citizeness?" said the president to the young girl, himself affected at the scene.

"Héloïse Tison, Citizen."

"What is your age?"

"Nineteen years."

"Where do you reside?"

"Rue des Nonandières, No. 24."

"Did you sell the Citizen Lindey, whom you now see in the dock, a bouquet of carnations this morning?"

The young girl turned round and looked at Maurice.

"Yes, Citizen, I did," said she.

The mother herself gazed at her daughter, her eyes dilated with terror.

"Are you aware that every carnation contained a billet addressed to the widow Capet?"

"I know it," replied the accused.

A movement of horror and admiration spread itself through the hall.

"Why did you offer these carnations to the Citizen Maurice?"

"Because I perceived that he wore the scarf of a municipal, and I imagined he was going to the Temple."

"Who are your accomplices?"

"I have none."

"What! have you then concocted this plot alone?"

"If it is a plot, I alone am concerned in it."

"But did the Citizen Maurice know —"

"That the flowers contained the billets?"

"Yes."

"The Citizen Maurice is a municipal; the Citizen Maurice could converse with the queen at any hour of the day or the night. The Citizen Maurice, if he had wished to say anything to the queen, had no occasion to write; he could speak."

"And you do not know the Citizen Maurice Lindey?"

"I had sometimes seen him come to the Temple while I was there with my poor mother, but I only know him by sight."

"Do you see, miserable wretch," said Lorin, shaking his fist at Simon, who, dismayed at the turn of affairs, with his head lowered, was attempting to sneak away unperceived, — "do you see what you have done?"

Every one regarded Simon with looks of deep indignation.

The president continued.

"Since you made up these bouquets, you of course are aware that each flower contained a paper, and therefore must know also what was written upon that paper?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, then, tell us what it was?"

"Citizen," said the young girl, with firmness, "I have told all I either can, or will, tell."

"Then you refuse to answer this question?"

"Yes."

"Do you know to what you expose yourself?"

"Yes."

"You trust perhaps to your youth and beauty?"

"I trust in God."

"Citizen Maurice Lindey, Citizen Hyacinthe Lorin," said the president, "you are free. The Commune recognizes your innocence, and admires your loyal spirit. Gendarmes, conduct the Citizeness Héloïse to the prison of the section."

At these words the woman Tison seemed to awake, and uttering a piercing cry, attempted to rush forward once more to embrace her daughter, but was withheld by the guards.

"I forgive you, mother," said the young girl, as they led her away.

The woman Tison uttered a savage roar, and fell down as if dead.

"Noble girl!" murmured Morand, filled at once with grief and admiration.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CONSPIRACY.

IMMEDIATELY following the events we have just narrated, a last scene came to fill up the complement of the drama which was unfolding its sombre turns of fortune.

The woman Tison, struck as by a thunderbolt at what had occurred, and totally abandoned by those who had escorted her, — for there is something revolting even in an involuntary crime, and it certainly amounts to a great crime when a mother condemns her own daughter to an ignominious death, were it even from excess of zealous patriotism, — the woman, we say, after remaining for some time in a state of insensibility, at length raised her head, looked wildly around, and finding herself deserted and alone, uttered a loud cry, and rushed toward the door.

At this door a few idlers more curious than the rest still remained congregated together, who dispersed when they beheld her, and pointing with their fingers, said one to another, —

"Do you see that woman? It is she who denounced her daughter."

The wretched woman uttered a cry of despair, and rushed toward the Temple. But when she was a third of the way through Rue Michel le Comte, a man placed himself in front of her, impeding her progress, and concealing his face in his mantle.

"Are you content," said he, "now you have killed your child?"

"Killed my child!" cried the poor mother, — "killed my child! no, no, it is not possible!"

"It is so, notwithstanding, for your daughter has been arrested."

"And where have they taken her?"

"To the Conciergerie; from there she will be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and you know what becomes of those who are sent there."

"Stand aside," said the woman Tison, "and let me pass."

"Where are you going?"

"To the Conciergerie."

"What are you going there for?"

"To see her again."

"They will not allow you to enter."

"They will permit me to lie at the door, to live there, to sleep there. I will remain there till she comes out, and then at least I shall see her once more."

"Suppose some one promised to restore you your child?"

"What do you say?"

"I ask you, supposing a man were to promise to give you back your child, would you do what that man required of you in return?"

"Anything for my child! anything for my Héloïse!" cried the woman, wringing her hands in despair, — "Anything! anything! anything!"

"Listen," said the unknown. "It is God who now punishes you."

"And for what?"

"For the tortures you have inflicted so mercilessly on a poor mother as unhappy as yourself."

"Of whom do you speak? What do you mean?"

"You have often driven the unhappy prisoner to the

very verge of that despair where you are yourself at this moment, by your revelations and brutalities. God now punishes you for all this by conducting this daughter, whom you love so much, to the scaffold."

"You said there was some man who could save her. Where is that man; what does he want; what does he demand?"

"This man requires that you cease to persecute the queen; that you ask her pardon for the outrages already committed against her; and that if at any time you perceive that this woman, who is also a weeping, despairing mother, by any unforeseen circumstance, or by some miracle from Heaven, is upon the point of saving herself, instead of opposing her flight, you do all in your power to aid and abet it."

"Listen, Citizen," said the woman Tison. "You are the man, — is it not so?"

"Well."

"It is you who promise to save my child?"

The unknown remained silent.

"Will you engage to do it? Will you promise; will you swear it? Answer me."

"All that a man can do to save a woman, I will do to save your daughter."

"He cannot save her!" cried the woman, uttering piercing cries, — "he cannot save her! When he promised me he lied."

"Do what you can for the queen, and I will do all in my power for your daughter."

"What care I for the queen? She is a mother who has a daughter. But if they come to cutting off heads, it will not be her daughter's they will cut off, but her own. They may cut my throat so that they spare my child. They may lead me to the guillotine, so that they

do not harm a hair of her head, and I will go there singing, —

"Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates à la lanterne. . . . "

And she commenced singing in a frightful voice, then suddenly stopped short, and burst into a fit of frenzied laughter.

The man in the mantle himself appeared alarmed at this burst of madness, and retreated a step or two from her.

"Ah! you shall not escape me thus," said the woman Tison, in despair, and retaining her hold of his mantle; "you shall not at one moment come and say to a mother, 'Do this, and I will rescue your child,' and afterward say, 'Perhaps.' Will you save her?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"The day she is conducted from the Conciergerie to the scaffold."

"But why wait — why not to-night? this evening — this moment, even?"

"Because I cannot do so."

"Ah! you know you cannot; you well know you cannot!" cried the woman Tison; "but as for me, I can."

"What can you do?"

"I can persecute the prisoner, as you call her; I can watch the queen, as you term her, aristocrat that you are! and I can enter the prison any hour of ~~the day or night~~. All this will I do. And as to her escaping, we shall see. Yes, we shall very well see — since they will not save my daughter — if that woman will escape. Head for head. Do you like that? Madame Veto has been queen; that I know. Héloïse Tison is only a poor girl; that I know. But under the guillotine we are all equal."

"Well, be it so," said the man in the mantle. "But you perform your part, and I will fulfil mine."

"Swear!"

"I swear it."

"By what do you swear?"

"Anything you choose."

"Have you a daughter?"

"No."

"Well, then," said the woman, in a disappointed tone, "by what then will you swear?"

"Listen. I swear by God."

"Bah!" exclaimed the woman Tison, "you know very well they have demolished the old one, and have not yet decided on the new."

"I swear by the tomb of my father."

"Swear not by a tomb, for that is prophetic of evil. Oh, my God! my God! When I think that perhaps in three days I may swear by the tomb of my child also! My daughter! My poor Héloïse!" cried the woman Tison, frantically, till at the sound of her voice, raised to a shrill scream, several windows were opened.

At sight of the opened windows, another man, who seemed to detach himself from the wall, advanced toward the first.

"Nothing can be done with this woman," said the first; "she is mad."

"No; she is a mother," replied the other, and dragged his companion away.

When she saw them leaving her, the woman Tison seemed to come back to herself.

"Where are you going?" cried she. "Are you going to rescue Héloïse? Wait for me then; I will go with you. Wait for me; do wait for me!"

And the poor wretch followed them, screaming, till at

the corner of the nearest street, she lost sight of them altogether; and not knowing which way to turn, she remained for an instant undecided, looking on every side, when seeing in the silence and darkness of the night only a double symbol of death, she uttered a cry of horror and fell on the pavement without sense or motion.

The clock struck ten.

During this time, and while the same hour was resounding from the Temple clock, the queen as usual sat in her chamber, between her daughter and her sister, near a smoky lamp. She was concealed from the sight of the municipals by Madame Royale, who, pretending to embrace her, was reading over again a small billet written on the smallest piece of paper imaginable, and in characters so minute that her eyes, already nearly blinded by her scalding tears, scarcely retained strength to decipher it.

The billet contained the following lines, —

"To-morrow, Tuesday, ask permission to walk in the garden; this will be accorded without objection, as an order has been issued to grant you this favor whenever you think proper to solicit it. After two or three turns, feign to feel fatigued, approach the cabin, and ask the Widow Plumeau to allow you to sit down. Then, in a moment, pretend to feel worse, and faint away. They will then close all the doors that they may be able to render you assistance, and you will remain with Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale. Immediately the trap-door of the cellar will open Precipitate yourself, your sister, and daughter through this aperture, and you are all three saved."

"*Mon Dieu!*" said Madame Royale, "does our evil destiny tire in the pursuit?"

"If this billet should prove only a trap," said Madame Elizabeth.

"No, no," said the queen; "these characters have always indicated to me the presence of a mysterious but equally brave and faithful friend."

"Is it the Chevalier?" demanded Madame Royale.

"He himself," replied the queen.

Madame Elizabeth clasped her hands.

"Let us each read the billet again very softly," replied the queen, "so that if one of us forget any particular, another will remember."

They all three re-read the letter, and had just finished so doing, when they heard the door of their chamber turn slowly on its hinges. The two princesses turned round; the queen alone remained stationary, except that by an almost imperceptible movement she raised her hand to her hair and hid the billet in her head-dress. It was a municipal who opened the door.

"What is your business, Monsieur?" demanded Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale, at the same moment.

"Hum!" said the municipal, "it appears to me that you retire very late to-night!"

"Is there, then," said the queen, with her usual dignity, "a new decree from the Commune, stating the hour at which I am to go to bed?"

"No, Citizen," said the municipal; "but if necessary they will make one."

"In the mean time, Monsieur," said Marie Antoinette, "respect, I do not say the chamber of a queen, but that of a woman."

"Truly," growled the municipal, "these aristocrats always speak as if they were something—"

But in the mean time, subdued by that dignity, haughty in her prosperity, but which three years of suffering had calmed down, he withdrew.

An instant afterward the lamp was extinguished, and the three females retired in darkness, as usual.

The next morning at nine o'clock, the queen, having re-read the letter before she arose, in order that she might not misconstrue any of the instructions contained there, tore it into almost invisible fragments. She then hastily finished her toilet, awoke her sister, and entered the chamber of the princess.

A minute afterward she came out, and called the municipals on guard.

"What do you want, Citizeness?" said one of them, appearing at the door, while the other did not even discontinue his breakfast to answer the royal appeal.

"Sir," said Marie Antoinette, "I have just left my daughter's chamber, and find her very ill. Her limbs are pained and swollen for want of exercise; and you know, sir, it is I who have doomed her to this life of inaction. I received permission to walk in the garden, but in descending I had necessarily to pass before the door of the room occupied by my husband in his lifetime. When I made the attempt my heart failed me, and I had not courage to do so, and have since limited my walks to the platform. Now, however, I find this exercise insufficient for my poor child. I therefore entreat you, Citizen Municipal, to request of General Santerre, in my name, the renewal of this privilege."

The queen had pronounced these words in a manner at once so mild, yet dignified; had so strenuously avoided all allusions to anything that could wound the feelings of the Republican, — that he who had entered her presence with his head covered, as for the most part was the custom of these men, gradually raised his red cap, and when she had finished, said, bowing respectfully, —

"Rest assured, Madame, your request shall be laid before the citizen general."

Then on retiring, as if to convince himself he had yielded to justice rather than weakness. "It is just," said he, "after all; it is only right."

"What is just?" demanded the other municipal.

"That this woman should be permitted to walk in the garden with her child, who is an invalid."

"Bah!" said the other, "when she asks to be allowed to walk from the Temple to the Place de la Revolution, that will be permitted her fast enough."

The queen heard these words, and grew pale, but still drew from them fresh courage for the great attempt she meditated.

The municipal finished his breakfast, and descended. The queen requested permission to take hers in her daughter's room, which was granted.

Madame Royale, to confirm the statement concerning her ill-health, did not quit her bed; the queen and Madame Elizabeth remained near her.

At eleven o'clock Santerre arrived. His coming was, as usual, announced by the drums beating the march, and by the entrance of a fresh battalion and other municipals, who came in their turn to relieve those on guard.

When Santerre had fully reviewed the battalion leaving, and the one about to take its place, and had paraded his large heavy-limbed horse round the court of the Temple, he stood still for a moment. This was for the purpose of receiving any claims, denunciations, or requests.

The municipal, availing himself of this halt, approached him.

"Well, what do you want?" said Santerre, bruskly.

"Citizen," said the municipal, "I come to entreat on the part of the queen —"

"Who is the queen?" interrupted Santerre.

"True!" said the municipal, astonished at his own mistake. "What have I said — I must be mad! I came to speak on the part of Madame Veto —"

"All in good time," said Santerre. "Now I understand you, what have you to say to me?"

"The young Veto is ill, it appears, from want of proper air and exercise."

"Well, is it necessary again to bring this before the public? The nation granted her permission to walk in the garden, and she refused it. Good-morning."

"That is exactly it. She regrets this now, and requests you will permit her to do so."

"There is no difficulty about that. You all hear," said Santerre, "that Capet's wife will come down to walk in the garden. Now," addressing the whole battalion, "take care she does not abuse this favor granted her by the nation, by making her escape over the wall; for if that happens I will cut off every one of your heads." A roar of laughter followed this pleasantry of the citizen general. "Now that is settled," said Santerre, "adieu. I am going to the Commune. It appears that they have reunited Roland and Barbaroux, and the question under debate is to deliver them a passport to another world."

It was this intelligence that had put the citizen general in such good humor.

He then galloped away.

The battalion who were removing the guard followed him; then the municipals also gave place to those who had received Santerre's instructions respecting the queen.

One of the municipals went up to Marie Antoinette

and informed her that the general had granted her request.

"Oh!" thought she, looking through the window toward heaven, "does thy wrath abate, Lord? and does thy terrible right hand grow weary of pressing so heavily upon us?"

"Thanks, Monsieur," said she to the municipal, with that fascinating smile which had proved the ruin of Barnave, and turned the heads of so many of his fellow-men, — "thanks!"

Then turning round to her little dog, who leaped after her, walking on his hind-legs, for he well understood from the looks of his mistress that something unusual was about to take place, —

"Come, Jet," said she, "we are going for a walk."

The little animal began to yelp and jump, and after looking at the municipal attentively, comprehending, no doubt, that from this man originated the intelligence which had made his mistress so happy, ran toward him, and wagging his long and silky tail, ventured even to caress him.

This man, who perhaps might be insensible to the prayers of a queen, could not resist the caresses of a little dog.

"If only on account of this little beast, you should go out more frequently, Citizeness Capet. Humanity commands us to take care of every creature."

"At what hour shall we go out, sir?" asked the queen. "Do you not think the sun would do us good?"

"You may go out when you please," said the municipal; "there has been no restriction on the subject. If you like to go out at mid-day, as that is the time they change the sentinels, there will be less bustle in the court."

"Then let it be at mid-day," said the queen, pressing her hand to her side to still the beating of her heart.

And she looked at this man, who appeared to her less stern than his associates, and who, perhaps, for kindly yielding to the wishes of the prisoner might fall a sacrifice to the conspiracy which they meditated.

But at the moment when compassion was stealing over the heart of the woman, the soul of the queen was aroused. She thought of the 10th of August and of the corpses of her faithful friends strewed upon the floors of the palace; she recalled to memory the 2d of September, and the head of the Princess Lamballe carried on a pike before her windows; she remembered the 21st of January when her husband died upon the scaffold, the noise of drums drowning his feeble voice; finally, she thought of her son, poor child! whose cries of distress had more than once reached her ears when she had no power to render him help, — and her heart became hardened.

"Alas!" cried she, "misfortune is like the blood of the ancient Hydras, — it teems with crops of future evils!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LITTLE DOG JET.

THE municipal left to call his colleagues and to read the *procès-verbal* left by the former municipals.

The queen remained alone with her sister and child. They all three looked at one another. Then Madame Royale threw her arms round the queen, and warmly embraced her. Madame Elizabeth approached her sister, and held out her hand.

"Let us offer up our prayers to God," said the queen, "but in such a manner that no one can hear us."

There are fatal epochs when prayer, that natural hymn of praise which God has implanted in every human heart, becomes suspicious in the eyes of men, since prayer is an act of praise and acknowledgment for mercies received. But in the ideas of her keepers hope and gratitude afforded subject for inquietude; since the queen could hope only for flight, and could thank God only for affording her the means of effecting it.

This mental prayer concluded, all three remained without uttering a word.

Eleven o'clock struck, then twelve. At the moment when the last stroke resounded from the bronze bell, the noise of arms was heard on the spiral staircase ascending to the queen.

"They are relieving sentinels," said she; "they come for us."

She saw her sister and daughter turn very pale.

"Courage!" said she, trembling herself with emotion.

"It is noon," cried a voice from below. "Bring down the prisoners."

"We are here, gentlemen," replied the queen, who, with a sentiment almost of regret, took a parting glance at the black walls and the rude appurtenances which had been more or less the companions of her captivity.

The first wicket opened, they gained the corridor, which, being dark, enabled the three captives to conceal their emotions. Before them frolicked little Jet; but when they arrived at the second, — that is to say the door from which Marie Antoinette endeavored to turn her eyes, — the faithful little animal first placed his nose to the ground, then laid his head upon his paws, and gave utterance to a succession of plaintive cries which terminated in a prolonged howl.

The queen passed on quickly, not having strength sufficient to recall her dog, and supported herself against the wall.

After advancing a few steps, her limbs refused their office, and she felt herself compelled to stop. Her sister and daughter approached her, and for a few moments the three females remained motionless, forming a melancholy group, the mother resting her face upon the head of her daughter, when little Jet rejoined them.

"Well!" cried the voice, "is she coming down or not?"

"We are coming," said the municipal, who had remained standing, respecting the queen's grief, so great in its simplicity.

"Come," said the queen, and again continued to descend.

When the prisoners had reached the bottom of the winding stair opposite the last door, under which the

sun shed his rays of bright gold, the rolling of the drum was heard summoning the guard; then a profound silence, the effect of curiosity, ensued, and the massive door opened, revolving slowly upon its creaking hinges.

A woman was seated on the ground, or rather on the corner of the stone contiguous to this door. It was the woman Tison, whom the queen had not seen for four and twenty hours, and whose absence at supper the preceding evening and at their morning's meal had excited her surprise.

The queen already saw the light, the trees, the garden, and beyond the barrier which enclosed the garden her eyes eagerly sought the little hut of the canteen, where her friends doubtless awaited her; when, at the sound of footsteps, the woman Tison removed her hands, and the queen beheld a pale and care-worn face beneath a mass of gray dishevelled locks.

The change wrought in these few hours was so great that the queen stood overwhelmed with astonishment.

Then, with the deliberation peculiar to those deficient in reason, the woman Tison knelt down before the door, impeding the passage of Marie Antoinette.

"What do you want, my good woman?" demanded the queen.

"He said it was necessary that you should pardon me."

"Who said so?" demanded the queen.

"The man in the mantle," replied the woman Tison.

The queen looked at Madame Elizabeth and her daughter, surprised at this appeal.

"Go along, go!" said the municipal; "let the Widow Capet pass; she has permission to walk in the garden."

"I know it," said the old woman; "that is why I

came to wait for her here, since they will not allow me to go up; and as I had to ask her forgiveness, I was obliged to wait for her coming out, to see her."

"But why then are you not permitted to go up?" demanded the queen.

The woman began to laugh.

"Because they pretend that I am mad," said she.

The queen looked at her and saw indeed that the wild eyes of the unhappy being reflected a strange light, — that vague light denoting aberration of intellect.

"Good Heaven!" said she. "Poor woman! what has happened to you?"

"Happened! Do you not know?" said the woman; "but if — You know very well, since it was on your account she was condemned."

"Who?"

"Héloïse."

"Your daughter?"

"Yes, she, my poor child!"

"Condemned! by whom; how; why?"

"Because she sold a bouquet."

"What bouquet?"

"A bouquet of carnations. She is not a flower-girl, though," continued the old woman, as if endeavoring to collect her thoughts; "then how could she sell the bouquet?"

The queen shuddered; an invisible link connected this scene with her present situation. She understood that the time must not be lost in useless conversation.

"My good woman," said she, "allow me to pass, I entreat you; you can tell me all this by-and-by."

"No, now; you must pardon me, and I must assist you to escape, that he may save my daughter."

The queen turned as pale as death.

"My God!" murmured she, raising her eyes to heaven, then turning toward the municipal, —

"Sir," said she, "have the kindness to remove this woman; you see that she is mad."

"Come, come, mother," said the municipal; "decamp!"

But the woman clung to the wall, still reiterating, —

"She must pardon me, that he may save my daughter."

"But who is he?"

"The man in the mantle."

"Sister," said Madame Elizabeth, "try to console her."

"Oh, willingly," said the queen; "I believe, indeed, that will be the shortest way;" then turning toward the mad woman, —

"What do you desire, good woman?" said she.

"I wish you to pardon me all the suffering I have caused you by my unjust behavior; all the accusations I have made against you; and trust that when you see the man in the mantle, you will command him to save my daughter; for he will do all that you desire."

"I do not know whom you mean by the man in the mantle," said the queen; "but if all that is necessary to your peace of mind is to obtain my pardon for the offences you imagine you have committed against me, I freely forgive you, my poor woman, from the depths of my heart, and trust only that any one I may have offended will as sincerely pardon me."

"Oh!" cried the woman Tison, with an indescribable accent of joy, "he will save my child, since you have forgiven me. Your hand, Madame! your hand —"

The queen astonished, and at a loss to comprehend the meaning, presented her hand to the woman, who seized it, and ardently pressed it to her lips.

At this moment the hoarse voice of a hawker was heard in the Rue de Temple.

"Here," cried he, "is the judgment and decree condemning Héloïse Tison to the penalty of death for the crime of conspiracy!"

Scarcely had these words reached the ears of the woman Tison, than rising from her knees, with an air of dogged resolution, she extended her arms to impede the passage of the queen.

"O God!" cried the queen, who had not lost one word of the hawker's terrible cry.

"Condemned to death!" cried the mother; "my child condemned! — my Héloïse lost! He has not then saved her, and now he cannot save her! Too late! too late!"

"Poor woman," said the queen, "believe me, I feel for you."

"You!" said she, looking at her fiercely with her blood-shot eyes. "You pity me? Never! never!"

"You are mistaken. I pity you from my heart; but do pray allow me to pass."

The woman burst into a hoarse laugh.

"Let you pass? No, no! I would have assisted you to escape, because he promised if I did so and asked your forgiveness he would rescue my daughter; but since she is condemned to death you shall not escape."

"Gentlemen!" cried the queen, "help! Do you not see that this woman is mad?"

"No, I am not mad; I know well what I am saying!" cried the woman. "It is the truth, — there was a conspiracy, and Simon discovered all. It was my poor daughter who sold the bouquet. She confessed it before the Revolutionary Tribunal — A bouquet of carnations — They had papers concealed in them."

"Madame," exclaimed the queen, "in the name of Heaven!"

The voice of the crier was again heard, repeating, —

"This is the judgment and decree condemning the girl Héloïse Tison to the punishment of death for the crime of conspiracy!"

"Do you hear it?" screamed the lunatic, around whom the National Guards had now gathered; "do you hear? Condemned to death; it is you who have killed my daughter — you, Austrian, you!"

"Gentlemen," said the queen, "for pity's sake, if you will not release me from this poor mad creature, allow me at least to return to my apartments. I cannot support the reproaches of this woman; unjust though they are, they crush my heart," and she turned away, sighing deeply.

"Yes, yes; weep, hypocrite!" cried the maddened wretch; "your bouquet cost her dear — She might have known it. Thus it is with all those who serve you. You bring misery, Austrian, everywhere! Your friends are dead, — your husband and your defenders have all perished, — and now they will sacrifice my unhappy child! When will your turn come, that no more may die for you?" And the miserable creature accompanied these last words with threatening gestures.

"Unhappy woman!" observed Madame Elizabeth, venturing to speak, "do you forget that she whom you address is the queen?"

"The queen!" repeated the maniac, whose madness every moment increased, "if she is the queen, let her defend my poor girl from the hangmen who seek her life — Let her show mercy to my poor Héloïse! — Kings show mercy — Render me back my child, and

I will acknowledge you as queen. Till then, you are only a woman, and a woman who brings misery upon all, and kills all — "

"Oh, have pity, Madame!" cried Marie Antoinette; "you see my tears and distress," and she again made an attempt to pass, no longer from any hope of escape, but to free herself from this cruel attack.

"You shall not pass!" roared the old woman. "You want to escape, Madame Veto — I know it all, the man in the mantle told me; you want to go and rejoin the Prussians. But you shall not escape," continued she, clasping the robe of the queen; "I will prevent you. *À la lanterne*, Madame Veto! To arms, citizens! let us march — "

And with her arms wrestling, her grizzled locks dishevelled and hanging over her haggard countenance, her eyes blood-shot, the unfortunate creature fell to the ground, in her fall tearing the robe she still held in her hand.

The queen, terrified, but freed at last from the maniac, was flying to the side of the garden, when all at once a terrible cry resounded, mingled with loud barking, and accompanied with a strange uproar, arousing the National Guards from their stupor, who, attracted by the uproar, immediately surrounded Marie Antoinette.

"To arms! to arms! Treason!" shouted a man, whom from his voice the queen recognized as the shoemaker Simon.

Near this man, who, sword in hand, guarded the threshold of the cabin, little Jet was barking furiously.

"To arms! every one to his post!" cried Simon; "we are betrayed. Compel the Austrian to turn back. To arms! to arms!"

An officer ran up, when Simon spoke to him, pointing

with enraged gestures to the interior of the hut. The officer in his turn then cried "To arms!"

"Jet! Jet!" called the queen, advancing some steps.

But the dog only continued to bark more furiously.

The National Guard ran to arms, and rushed toward the hut, while the municipals took possession of the queen, her daughter, and sister, and compelled them to re-enter the wicket, which they closed behind them.

"Prepare your arms!" cried the municipals to the sentinels. And the sound of firearms being made ready for action was heard.

"It is there! it is there!" cried Simon, "under the trap. I saw it move, I am certain of it. Besides, the Austrian's dog, a good little animal who was not in the plot, barked at the conspirators, who are no doubt still in the cellar. Hold! he barks again."

Indeed, Jet, instigated by Simon's cries and shouts, began to bark again more strenuously than before.

The officer seized the ring of the trap, but seeing he was unable to raise it, two of the gendarmes went to his assistance, but without the slightest success.

"You perceive they hold the trap-door from below. Fire through the trap-door, my friends, fire!" said Simon.

"Oh!" cried Madame Plumeau, "you will break my bottles."

"Fire!" repeated Simon, "fire!"

"Be silent, brawler!" said the officer, "bring some hatchets, and open the planks. Now let a platoon make ready, and fire into the trap-door the instant an opening is made." The groaning of planks and a sudden jerk informed the National Guards that some movement was taking place in the interior. Directly afterward they heard a motion under ground, like an iron portcullis being closed.

"Courage!" cried the officer to the sappers, who worked indefatigably.

The hatchets severed the planks. Twenty guns were lowered in the direction of the opening, which enlarged every moment.

But through the aperture no one could be seen.

The officer lighted a torch and threw it into the cave. It was empty.

They then raised the trap-door, which now offered no resistance. "Follow me!" said the officer, bravely leaping down the steps.

"Forward! forward!" cried the National Guards, following the example of their officer.

"Ah! Madame Plumeau," said Simon, "you lend your cellar to aristocrats!"

The wall was broken down; the humid soil had been trampled by numerous feet; and a conduit of three feet wide and five feet high, like the branch of a trench, plunged in the direction of Rue de la Corderie. The officer ventured into this opening, resolved to follow these aristocrats into the bowels of the earth; but when he had advanced three or four steps he found all farther progress impeded by an iron grating.

"Halt!" cried he, to those who were closely pressing behind him; "we can proceed no farther until this portcullis is removed."

"Well," said the municipal, who having placed the prisoners in security anxiously awaited the news, — "well, what have you discovered?"

"*Parbleu!*" said the officer, reappearing, "it was doubtless a conspiracy; the aristocrats wanted to carry off the queen during her walk, and she was probably in collusion with them."

"Plague take it!" cried the municipal, "send

some one for the Citizen Santerre, and inform the Commune!"

"Soldiers," said the officer, "remain in this cellar, and if any one presents himself, kill him!"

And the officer, having given this order, ascended the winding stair to make his report.

"Ah! ah!" said Simon, rubbing his hands, "ah! ah! will they still say I am a fool? Brave Jet! Jet is a famous patriot; Jet has saved the Republic. Come here, Jet, come!"

And the brute who had coaxed the poor little dog, the moment he approached him, raised his foot and kicked him to a distance of several feet.

"I like you, Jet," said he; "ah, you will cut your mistress's throat! Come here, Jet, come!"

But this time instead of obeying him, Jet ran away howling, on the road toward the keep.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MUSCADIN.

It was near two o'clock. Lorin was promenading up and down in Maurice's room, while Agesilaus polished his master's boots in the antechamber, only for the greater convenience of conversation the door remained open, and during his walk Lorin often stopped and questioned the official.

"And you say, Citizen Agesilaus, that your master left home this morning?"

"Oh, upon my soul! yes."

"At the usual hour?"

"It might be ten minutes earlier, or ten minutes later, I cannot say exactly."

"And you have not seen him since?"

"No, Citizen."

Lorin continued his walk, and after three or four turns again stopped and renewed his questions.

"Had he his sword with him?" demanded he.

"When he goes to the section he invariably carries it."

"Are you sure he has gone to the section?"

"He told me so, at least."

"In that case I shall join him," said Lorin; "but in case I miss him, tell him I have been here, and am coming back."

"Wait!" said Agesilaus.

"Why?"

"I hear his footstep on the staircase."

Almost at the same moment the door opened, and Maurice entered. Lorin bestowed a hasty glance upon him, and perceived nothing extraordinary in his appearance.

"So you are come at last," said he. "I have been waiting here these two hours."

"So much the better," said Maurice, smiling; "that has afforded you plenty of time to compose distichs and quatrains."

"Alas! *mon ami*," replied the improvisator, "I do not make them now."

"Why, is the world coming to an end?"

"My dear Maurice, I am very unhappy."

"You unhappy?"

"Yes, I am miserable. I am suffering from remorse."

"Remorse?"

"Oh, by Heaven! yes," said Lorin. "Between you and her I had to choose! — between you and her I could not hesitate; but, you see, Arthémise is in despair, for she was her friend."

"Poor girl!"

"And it was she who gave me her address — "

"You would have done much better to have allowed things to take their natural course."

"Yes; and at this very moment you would have been condemned in her stead. Powerfully argued, dear friend. And I came to ask your advice! I thought you were wiser than that."

"Never mind, ask away."

"This poor girl: do you understand? I wish to attempt some means of saving her. Even if I could only give or receive a blow in her defence, I feel as if it would do me good."

"You are mad, Lorin," said Maurice, shrugging his shoulders.

"Perhaps if I made an appeal to the Revolutionary Tribunal?"

"It is too late, she is condemned."

"Truly," said Lorin, "it is dreadful to see this poor girl sacrificed thus."

"The more so since it was my safety that has entailed her death. But after all, Lorin, we have one consolation. She was a conspirator."

"Goodness!" said Lorin, "does not every one conspire nowadays? She has done no more, poor girl, than every one else does."

"Grieve for her neither too much, nor too loudly, my friend," said Maurice, "for we have to bear our share in this trouble. Believe me, we are not so fully cleared from the accusation of being her accomplices, that no stain remains behind. To-day, at the section, I was termed 'Girondin,' by the Captain of the Chasseurs of Saint Leu; and I, at the same time, found it necessary to convince him by a stroke from my sword that he was mistaken."

"Then that was the reason you returned so late?"

"Just so."

"But why did you not inform me?"

"Because in affairs of this nature you cannot restrain yourself, and the thing had to be concluded immediately, that it might make no noise."

"And that scum called you 'Girondin,' Maurice, — you, a thoroughbred Republican?"

"By Jove, he did! and this will convince you that another adventure of this nature and we become unpopular; and you well know, Lorin, in these times unpopular is a synonymous term for *suspected*."

"I know it well," said Lorin; "and that word appalls the bravest heart; but never mind — It is repugnant

to my feelings to allow this poor Héloïse to be led to the guillotine without asking her forgiveness."

"What do you wish to do?"

"I wish you to remain here; you have nothing to reproach yourself with, so far as she is concerned. With me, you see, the case is very different. Since I can do nothing for her, I will meet her on her way. I wish to go there, Maurice; do you comprehend me? Were she to give me only a wave of her hand —"

"I will accompany you then," said Maurice.

"Impossible, my friend; you are a municipal, secretary to a section, and you have just been tried, while I have only been your defender. They would think you guilty, therefore remain here. As for me, it is quite another thing. I risk nothing, and therefore go."

"Go then," said he, "but be prudent."

Lorin smiled, shook Maurice's hand, and left.

Maurice opened his window, and waved a sad adieu; but before Lorin had turned the corner of the street, Maurice could not help gazing wistfully at him more than once, and each time, as if drawn by magnetic influence and sympathy, Lorin turned round, looked at him, and smiled.

At last, when the latter had disappeared at the corner of the quay, Maurice closed the window, threw himself into a fauteuil, and fell into one of those dreamy moods which in people of strong mind and vigorous constitution are often the presentiments of misfortune, as they resemble the calm which is the precursor of the storm. He was softly awakened from his revery, or rather state of stupor, by his official, who, on returning from the execution of some commission, entered with the sprightly air of a servant anxious to communicate his budget of news. Seeing his master preoccupied, however, he dared not in-

terrupt him, and consoled himself by constantly passing and re-passing before him, without any reasonable cause for so doing.

"What is it?" at length said Maurice; "speak, if you have anything to tell me."

"Ah! Citizen, another desperate conspiracy."

Maurice merely shrugged his shoulders.

"A conspiracy enough to make the hair of one's head stand upright," continued Agesilaus.

"Indeed!" replied Maurice, like a man accustomed to hear daily of thirty conspiracies at this epoch.

"Yes, Citizen," replied Agesilaus; "it drives me to frenzy, you see. The very thought of it makes a good patriot's flesh creep."

"Let us hear this conspiracy," said Maurice.

"The Austrian has all but escaped."

"Nonsense!" said Maurice, beginning to listen with greater attention.

"It seems," continued Agesilaus, "that the Widow Capet was in communication with the girl Tison, who is to be guillotined to-day. She has not escaped that fate, unfortunate creature!"

"How had the queen communication with this girl?" demanded Maurice, who felt the perspiration exuding at every pore.

"Through a carnation. Can you imagine, Citizen, how they could have conveyed the plan to her in a carnation?"

"In a carnation? Who did this?"

"Monsieur le Chevalier de — wait then! His name is notorious, but as for me, I forget all these names. A Chevalier de Chateau — what a fool I am! It is not a Chateau — a Chevalier de Maison."

"De Maison-Rouge?"

"That is it."

"Impossible!"

"How impossible? when I told you they have found the trap-door, the subterranean passage, and coaches."

"On the contrary, you have told me nothing of all this."

"Well, I am going to tell you, then."

"Go on, then. If it is a story, it is at least a good one."

"No, Citizen, it is not a story, very far from it; and in proof of that, I had it from a citizen porter. The aristocrats had dug a mine, and this mine commenced at Rue de la Corderie, and terminated in the cellar of the little cabin belonging to Madame Plumeau, who has narrowly escaped being arrested as an accomplice. You know her, do you not?"

"Yes," replied Maurice; "go on!"

"Capet's wife was to escape by the subterranean passage. She already had her foot on the first step, when Simon caught her by her robe — But stay, they are beating to arms in the city, and the recall in the sections. Do you not hear the drum? There! It is said that the Prussians are at Dammartin, and have reconnoitred as far as the frontiers."

In the midst of this maze of words, a medley of truth and falsehood, probability and impossibility, Maurice seized the guiding thread. All sprung from the carnation presented before his eyes to the queen, and purchased by himself from the poor miserable flower-girl. This carnation contained the plan of a plot which had just come to light, the details of which, more or less true, had been reported by Agesilaus. At this moment the noise of the drum came nearer, and Maurice heard the crier proclaim in the street, —

"Tremendous conspiracy discovered at the Temple by the Citizen Simon! Grand conspiracy in favor of the Widow Capet discovered at the Temple!"

"Yes, yes," said Maurice; "it is just as I thought. There is some truth in all this. And Lorin, in the midst of this popular excitement, goes to offer his hand to this girl and be cut to pieces."

Maurice snatched up his hat, buckled his sword-belt, and with two bounds was in the street.

"Where can he be?" said Maurice to himself. "Probably on the road to the Conciergerie," and he rushed toward the quay.

At the extreme end of the Quai de la Mégisserie some pikes and bayonets, bristling in the midst of the crowd, attracted his attention, and he fancied in the centre he could distinguish the uniform of a National Guard, and in the group signs of hostile movements. He ran, his heart oppressed with the dread of impending misfortune, toward the assemblage on the banks of the river.

The National Guard pressed by the company of Marseillais was Lorin. He was very pale, his lips compressed, his eyes menacing; his hand upon the handle of his sword, measuring the place best calculated to strike the blows he fully intended to inflict on his cowardly assailants.

Within two feet from Lorin stood Simon. He was laughing ferociously, and pointing him out to the Marseillais and the populace, saying, —

"Look at him! look well at him! He is one of those that I drove from the Temple yesterday for an aristocrat. He is one of those who favored the correspondence with the carnations. This is an accomplice of the girl Tison, who will pass here presently. Well, do you see? — he walks quietly on the quay while his coadjutor goes to

the guillotine; and perhaps she was even more to him than an assistant. She might be his mistress, and he is here to bid her farewell, or to try to save her!"

Lorin was not the man to endure more. He drew his sword. At the same time the crowd opened before a man who charged headlong into the group, whose broad shoulders had already knocked down two or three spectators who were preparing to become actors in this scene.

"Be happy, Simon," said Maurice. "You regretted, no doubt, that I was not with my friend to enable you to turn your new title of Denunciator to full account. Denounce! Simon, denounce! I am here."

"Faith! yes," said Simon, with his hideous sneer; "and your arrival is very apropos. This," continued he, "is the elegant Maurice Lindey, who was accused at the same time as the girl Tison, but was acquitted because he was rich."

"To the lamp-post with them! to the lamp-post!" cried the Marseillais.

"Yes, forsooth, you had better make the attempt!" said Maurice, and advancing a step he pricked one of the foremost of the cut-throats in the forehead, so that the blood from his wound nearly blinded him.

"Have at the murderer!" cried the latter.

The Marseillais lowered their pikes, raised their hatchets, and loaded their guns, while the frightened crowd dispersed, leaving the two friends to contend alone against this storm of blows. They regarded each other with a last sad, yet sublime smile, while calmly awaiting their destruction from the whirlwind of iron and flame which threatened them, when all at once the door of the house against which they were leaning opened, and a swarm of young people, attired in the habits of those termed

"Muscadins," or "Fops," each wearing a sword and brace of pistols in his girdle, rushed upon the Marseillais, and were instantly engaged in a terrific contest.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried Maurice and Lorin, simultaneously, animated by this unexpected relief, without reflecting that to fight in the ranks of the new-comers was to confirm Simon's accusation, — "Hurrah!"

But if they were forgetful of their own safety, another thought for them. A short young man, about five-and twenty years of age, with blue eyes, who fought without any intermission, with infinite science and valor, with a heavy sword which any one would have thought his delicate and feminine hand incapable of wielding, perceiving that Maurice and Lorin, instead of escaping by the door which he seemed to have left open for that purpose, remained fighting by his side, turned to them and said in a low voice, —

"Fly directly through this door; pay no attention to what we do here, or you will uselessly compromise yourselves."

Then, seeing the two friends hesitate, he suddenly cried, addressing himself to Maurice, "Away! no patriots among us, Citizen Lindey; we are aristocrats here!"

At these words, united to the audacity which would induce a man publicly to accuse himself of what at this period must lead to certain death, the crowd uttered a loud shout.

But the fair young man and two or three of his friends, without evincing any symptoms of alarm, pushed Maurice and Lorin into the alley, and closed the door behind them. They then threw themselves into the mêlée, which was now considerably augmented by the approach of the fatal cart.

Maurice and Lorin, thus miraculously saved, regarded each other in amazement. The outlet seemed to have been designed for the express purpose of their escape. They entered a court, and at the end discovered a small private door which opened into Rue Saint Germain l'Auxerrois.

At this moment a detachment of gendarmes issued from Pont au Change, who had soon swept the quay, although, from the cross-street where our two friends had concealed themselves, they heard for an instant the noise of an obstinate struggle. These gendarmes preceded the cart which conducted the hapless Héloïse to the scaffold.

"Gallop!" cried a voice, — "gallop."

The cart proceeded at a quick pace, and Lorin saw the unfortunate girl standing, a smile upon her lips, and calm reliance in her eye, but was unable to exchange even a gesture with her, as she passed without seeing him, in the midst of a perfect maelstrom of people, shouting, —

"To the guillotine with the aristocrat! to the guillotine!"

The noise decreased in the distance till it reached the Tuileries. Then the little door through which Maurice and Lorin had escaped, again opened, and three or four Muscadins, with their clothes torn and stained with blood, passed through. It was probably all that remained of the little troop. The fair young man went through the last.

"Alas!" said he, "this cause is then accursed!" and casting from him his sword, notched and bloody, he rushed toward Rue des Lavandières.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CHEVALIER DE MAISON-ROUGE.

MAURICE hastened to return to the section to enter a complaint against Simon. It is true that before quitting Maurice, Lorin had found a more expeditious way; this was to collect some Thermopyles to lie in wait for him, and on his first exit from the Temple to kill him in a pitched battle. But Maurice strenuously opposed this plan.

"You are ruined," said he, "if you make use of these means. Crush Simon, but do it legally. That ought to be an easy thing enough to the lawyers."

Consequently, the next morning, Maurice laid a formal complaint before the section, but was both astonished and annoyed when the president turned a deaf ear, excusing himself by saying he could not interfere between two good citizens, each incited by the love of country.

"Good," said Maurice. "I know now how to act to merit the reputation of a good citizen. To assemble the people in order to assassinate a man who displeases you: this you call being 'incited by love of country.' Well, I agree to Lorin's opinion, which I was wrong to dispute. After to-day, as you hear, I shall adopt patriotism, and shall first experiment upon Simon."

"Citizen Maurice," replied the president, "you are, after all, perhaps more to blame in this affair than Simon. He discovered a conspiracy, which it was not his province to do. You saw nothing, although the discovery formed

part of your duty; and more, you have held communication — accidentally or intentionally, we know not which — with the enemies of the nation."

"I?" said Maurice. "Well, this is something new. And with whom, pray, Citizen President?"

"With the Citizen Maison-Rouge."

"I?" said Maurice, stupefied. "I had communication with the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge? I do not know him — I never —"

"You have been seen speaking to him."

"I?"

"Shaking his hand."

"I?"

"Yes."

"Where? When, Citizen President?" said Maurice, carried away by the firm conviction of his own innocence. "You have lied!"

"Your zeal for your country carries you too far, Citizen Maurice;" said the president, "and you will regret what you have said, when I tell you I can prove that I have advanced nothing but the truth. Here are three different reports accusing you."

"Now," said Maurice, "do you really think me simple enough to believe in your 'Chevalier de Maison-Rouge'?"

"And why should you not believe it?"

"Because it is only the ghost of a conspirator, with whom you always have a conspiracy ready to amuse your enemies."

"Read the denunciations."

"I will read nothing," said Maurice. "I protest I have never seen the Chevalier, — never spoken to him. Let any one who doubts my word of honor come and tell me so. I shall know how to answer him."

The president shrugged his shoulders. Maurice, who did not wish to be in arrears with any one, did the same. An air of gloomy silence pervaded the remainder of the sitting. After the meeting was concluded, the president, a stanch patriot raised to the highest rank in the district by the votes of his fellow-citizens, approached Maurice, and said, —

"Come, Maurice, I want to speak to you."

Maurice followed the president, who conducted him into a little cabinet adjoining that where the sittings were held. On arriving there, he regarded Maurice for a moment in silence; then placing his hand on his shoulder, —

"Maurice," said he, "I knew and esteemed your father; this makes me esteem and love you. Believe me, you incur great danger from want of faith, — the first falling off of a truly revolutionary spirit. Maurice, my friend, they who lose their faith also lose their fidelity. You do not believe in the enemies of the nation, therefore you pass near without seeing them, and become an instrument in their plots without being aware of it."

"What, the devil!" said Maurice, "I know, Citizen, I am a man of feeling, and possess some share of patriotic zeal; but my zeal does not render me a fanatic. There are twenty pretended conspiracies, to which the public assign the same name. I demand once for all to face my accuser."

"You will not believe in conspirators, Maurice," said the president; "then tell me, do you believe in the red carnation for which Héloïse Tison was yesterday guillotined?"

Maurice started.

"Do you believe in the subterranean passage drilled under the Temple garden communicating through the

cellar of Citizen Plumeau with a certain house in the Rue de la Corderie?"

"No," said Maurice.

"Then do as Thomas the Apostle did, — go and see."

"I am not on guard at the Temple, and they would not allow me to enter."

"Any one may enter the Temple now."

"How is that?"

"Read this report, since you are so incredulous. I shall only proceed by official information."

"Ah!" said Maurice, reading the report, "has it come to this?"

"Continue."

"Are they going to remove Marie Antoinette to the Conciergerie?"

"They are; and do you think that from a dream, or what you call an imaginary idea or an idle story, the Committee of Public Safety would have adopted so grave a measure?"

"This measure has been adopted, but will never be executed, like many more I have seen sanctioned and all —"

"Read to the end," said the president, and he presented him with the last paper.

"The receipt of Richard, the jailer of the Conciergerie!" cried Maurice.

"She has been there these two hours." This time Maurice remained deep in thought.

"The Commune, as you know," continued the president, "acts with profound judgment. It is digging a furrow long and straight in its course; its measures are not puerile, and it has put in execution the principle of Cromwell, — 'Kings should be struck on the head.' Read this secret note from the minister of police."

Maurice read, —

"Seeing that we possess the certainty that the *ci-devant* Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is in Paris; that he has been seen in several places; that he has left traces of his appearance in various plots, happily frustrated, — I request all chiefs of sections to redouble their vigilance — "

"Well?" asked the president.

"I must believe you, Citizen President," said Maurice, and he continued, —

"Description of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge: In height, five feet three inches; fair hair, blue eyes, straight nose, chestnut-colored beard, dimpled chin, soft voice, and hands like a female's."

At this description a strange light burst upon Maurice; he thought of the young man who commanded the troop of Muscadins, and who on the preceding evening saved the lives of himself and Lorin, and so valiantly drew his sword upon the Marseillais in their defence.

"The deuce!" muttered Maurice, "it must be he; in that case the accusation that I have been seen speaking to him is not false. But I cannot remember taking his hand."

"Maurice," asked the president, "what do you say to all this, now, my friend?"

"That I believe what you have said," said Maurice, musing sadly, who for some time past, without understanding what evil influence saddened his life, had noticed everything darkening around him.

"Do not trifle thus with popularity," said the president. "In these days, Maurice, popularity is life. As for unpopularity, it is to be suspected of treason; and the Citizen Maurice Lindey ought not to brook the suspicion of being a traitor."

Maurice had nothing to reply to sentiments so much in accordance with his own. He thanked his old friend and left the section.

"Ah!" murmured he, "there is too much suspicion and battling. Now," drawing a deep breath, — "now for peace, innocence, and joy; now to Geneviève," and Maurice took the road to the old Rue Saint Jacques.

When he reached the abode of the master-tanner, Dixmer and Morand were supporting Geneviève, who was suffering from a violent attack of hysterics. Thus, instead of being allowed to enter unceremoniously as he was accustomed to do, a servant met him in the passage.

"Announce me, at all events," said he, "and if Dixmer cannot conveniently receive me, I will retire."

The domestic entered the little pavilion, while Maurice remained in the garden. It seemed to him that something strange was going on in the house, and the workmen, instead of being occupied in their usual employment, were pacing restlessly about the garden. At length Dixmer himself appeared.

"Come in, dear Maurice," said he, — "come in; you are not one of those against whom the door is closed."

"What is the matter?" inquired the young man.

"Geneviève is ill," said Dixmer; "indeed, more than ill, — she is delirious."

"Gracious Heaven!" cried the young man, overcome at again encountering trial and suffering; "what, then, is the matter with her?"

"You are aware, my friend," said Dixmer, "one never knows anything concerning the illness of women, especially their husbands."

Geneviève was lying on a lounge; near her stood Morand, offering her some salts, which she smelled occasionally.

"Well?" asked Dixmer.

"Always the same thing," replied Morand.

"Héloïse? Héloïse?" murmured the young woman, from between her closed teeth and white lips.

"Sophie!" repeated Maurice, in much surprise.

"Oh, my God! yes," replied Dixmer, greatly affected; "Geneviève most unfortunately saw the cart pass yesterday conveying the unhappy girl to the scaffold. Since then she has had five or six attacks of hysterics, and keeps on continually calling upon Sophie."

"But the most astonishing thing of all is, that in her she recognized the girl who sold the carnations, which you already know about," said Morand.

"Certainly, I know about them," said Maurice, "since in consequence of them I very narrowly escaped having my head cut off."

"Ah! we have heard all that, dear Maurice, and, believe me, we have not been slightly alarmed; but Morand was at the sitting, and saw you fully acquitted and liberated."

"Silence!" said Maurice; "she again speaks."

"Oh, those empty, unintelligible words!" exclaimed Dixmer.

"Maurice," murmured Geneviève; "they are going to kill Maurice. Rescue him, Chevalier, — rescue him!" A profound silence followed these words.

"Maison-Rouge," again murmured Geneviève; "Maison-Rouge!"

Maurice felt a slight suspicion, but he could make out nothing clearly, and was too much affected by the suffering of Geneviève to attend much to her words.

"Have you called in a physician?" demanded Maurice.

"Oh, it will prove nothing," said Dixmer; "a momentary delirium, that is all," and he shook his wife so

violently by the arm that she revived, and uttering a shrill cry, opened her eyes, which till now had remained closed.

"Ah, you are both here, and Maurice with you. Oh, I am so glad to see you, dear friend; if you knew what I have —" she corrected herself — "what we have suffered for the last two days."

"Yes, we are all here," said Maurice; "have no more terror on that account. But there is one name above all others you must not accustom yourself to pronounce, seeing that at this moment it does not bear a very high repute."

"What name?" quickly demanded Geneviève.

"The Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"Have I named the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?" inquired Geneviève, bewildered.

"Without doubt you have," said Dixmer, with a forced laugh; "but understand, Maurice, there is nothing surprising in that, since it is said he was an accomplice with the girl Tison, and that it was he who concocted the whole plan of escape so happily frustrated yesterday."

"I do not say there is anything surprising in it," said Maurice; "I only say he should keep himself well concealed."

"Who?" demanded Dixmer.

"Zounds! The Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. The Commune seeks for him; and their bloodhounds have a fine scent."

"Provided that, before they arrest him," said Morand, "he has not accomplished some new enterprise that may succeed better than the last."

"At all events," said Maurice, "it will not be in favor of the queen."

"Why not?" demanded Morand.

"Because she is henceforth shielded from his bold attempts."

"Where is she then?" inquired Dixmer.

"At the Conciergerie," replied Maurice; "she was taken there this evening."

Dixmer, Geneviève, and Morand uttered a cry which Maurice mistook for one of surprise.

"Thus you see," continued he, "adieu to the Chevalier's plans for the queen. The Conciergerie is more secure than the Temple."

Morand and Dixmer exchanged looks unperceived by Maurice.

"Ah!" exclaimed Maurice, "Madame Dixmer has turned faint again."

"Geneviève!" said Dixmer, "you must go to bed, my child; you suffer."

Maurice took the hint. He respectfully kissed Geneviève's hand, and quitted the house. Morand left with him, and accompanied him as far as the old Rue Saint Jacques, where he parted with him to exchange some words with a man, a superior sort of domestic, who held a horse ready saddled and bridled. Maurice was so much occupied with his own thoughts that he did not even ask the man's name; indeed, he and Morand had not exchanged a word since they quitted the house together.

Maurice took the road to Rue des Fossés Saint Victor, and gained the quay.

"It is strange," said he, walking on. "Is my mind weakened, or are these events assuming undue importance? Everything appears to me as if viewed through a magnifying glass." And to recover his equanimity, Maurice leaned over the parapet of the bridge and presented his face to the breeze.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PATROL.

As he lost himself in these reflections, and leaning over the parapet of the bridge, enjoyed a melancholy pleasure in gazing on the dark still water, he heard the measured tread of a little troop, like that of a patrol. Maurice turned round; it was a company of the National Guard, arrived by the other extremity, and in the obscurity he fancied he recognized Lorin. It was he, indeed. The instant he saw his friend Maurice he ran toward him with open arms.

"Found at last," cried Lorin. "Faith, it is not without some trouble that we have rejoined you.

> "'But since I find a friend so fond,
> My fate assumes an aspect new.'

This time you will not complain, I hope, for I have given you Racine instead of Lorin."

"But what do you do here as patrol?" inquired Maurice, anxiously.

"I am the chief of the expedition, old fellow; the business is to establish our blemished reputation upon its original footing." Then turning toward his company, "Carry arms! Present arms! Shoulder arms!"

"There, my lads, it is not yet sufficiently dark, so you can talk over your little affairs while we follow your example." Then turning to Maurice, "I have heard great news at the section to-day," continued Lorin.

"What!"

"First, that you and I are beginning to be suspected."

"I know it. What next?"

"Secondly, that the whole conspiracy of the carnations was conducted by the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"I know that also."

"But this you do not know, — that the conspiracy of the carnations and that of the subterranean passage are one and the same."

"Again, I know it."

"Then let us pass on to the third piece of news. This I am certain you cannot know. We go this night to capture the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"To take the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"Yes."

"Have you then turned gendarme?"

"No; but I am a patriot. A patriot belongs to his country. Now my country is horribly ravaged by this Chevalier, who forms plot upon plot. Well, my country commands me, being a patriot, to free her from this Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, who distresses her horribly, and I obey my country."

"It is all the same," said Maurice; "but it is singular that you should be charged with this commission."

"I am not charged; I charge myself, or rather, I should say, I solicited the commission. It required a brilliant stroke to reinstate us in our former position; while our re-establishment will not only prove security for our lives, but still more the right of putting, at the very first opportunity offered, six inches of steel into the belly of that hideous Simon."

"But how are they sure it was the Chevalier who was the instigator of this subterranean plot?"

"They are not yet certain, but they presume so."

"You proceed, then, upon inference?"

"No; we proceed by certainty."

"How do you make out all this?"

"Listen."

"I am listening."

"I had scarcely heard the cry 'Grand conspiracy discovered by the Citizen Simon,' — that beast Simon (the wretch is everywhere), — than I wished to judge of the truth for myself. Then, they spoke of a subterranean passage."

"Does it really exist?"

"It does; I have seen it;

"'Seen it with both my eyes; that I call seeing, —'

There, why do you not hiss?"

"Because that is Molière; and besides, these events, I must confess, appear to me rather too serious for pleasantry."

"What can we jest about, if we do not jest about serious things?"

"You say, then, that you have seen it?"

"I repeat that I have seen the subterranean passage. It extends from the cellar of the Widow Plumeau to a house in the Rue de la Corderie, No. 12 or 14, I cannot remember which."

"Really? Have you passed through it, Lorin?"

"I have, the whole length; and, faith, it is a trench prettily cut, I assure you; and moreover it was divided by three iron gratings, which they have been obliged to remove one after the other, but which, in case these conspirators had succeeded, would have given them time, by sacrificing two or three of their number, to have placed Madame Widow Capet in a place of safety. Happily it is not so, and that hideous Simon discovered all!"

"But it appears to me," said Maurice, "those who ought to have been first arrested were the inhabitants of the house in the Rue de la Corderie."

"This would have been, had they not found the house perfectly uninhabited."

"But at least this house must belong to some one?"

"Yes, to a new proprietor; but no one knows who. They know the house changed masters two weeks since, and that is all. The neighbors have often heard a noise; but the house being very old, they had imagined it was undergoing thorough repair. As to the late proprietor, he has left Paris. In the mean time I arrived."

"'Upon my word!' said I to Santerre, drawing him aside, 'you are in an awkward situation.'

"'Indeed we are,' replied he.

"'This house has been sold, has it not?'

"'Yes, it was, about a fortnight ago.'

"'Was it sold in the presence of a notary?'

"'Yes.'

"'Then we must search all the notaries in Paris, to discover which of them sold this house, and then make him produce the agreement, at the bottom of which will be found the name of the purchaser.'

"'Well and good!' said Santerre, 'that is capital advice, and coming too from a man they accuse of not being a good patriot. Lorin! Lorin! I will re-establish you, or may the foul fiend seize me!'

"To be brief," continued Lorin, "this was no sooner said than done. The notary was sought for, the act was found, and upon the agreement the name and domicile of the culprit were written. Then Santerre took me aside, and I have engaged to arrest him."

"Was this man the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"No, only his accomplice, — that is to say, in all probability he was so."

"Then how is it you say you are going to arrest the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"We are going to arrest them all together."

"Do you, then, know this Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"Perfectly."

"Have you seen the description of him?"

"By thunder! Santerre gave it to me. Five feet two or three inches, fair hair, blue eyes, straight nose, etc.; besides, I have seen him."

"When?"

"This very day."

"You have seen him?"

"And so have you."

Maurice started.

"The short, fair young man who rescued us this morning, — he who commanded the troop of Muscadins, and struck so hard."

"Was that the Chevalier?" demanded Maurice.

"Himself. They followed and lost him in the environs of the domicile of our proprietor of the Rue de la Corderie, so that we surmise they live together."

"It seems probable."

"It is certain."

"But it seems to me, Lorin," added Maurice, "that if this evening you arrest him who rescued you this very morning, you are much wanting in gratitude."

"Go along, then," said Lorin; "why, you don't suppose he saved us for our own sakes, do you?"

"For what else, then?"

"Not at all; they were in ambush to carry off the poor girl, Héloïse Tison, as she passed to the scaffold. Our cut-throats embarrassed them, so they fell upon the

cut-throats; that was the whole of it. We have been saved by a *contre-coup*. Now, as the intention is everything, and there was no intention, I have nothing to accuse myself with on the score of ingratitude. Besides, do you see, Maurice, the capital point is necessity; and the necessity is that we should reinstate ourselves by some brilliant achievement. And then I have promised for you."

"To whom?"

"To Santerre; he knows that you command this expedition."

"How can that be?"

"'Are you sure of arresting these criminals?' said he to me.

"'Yes,' I replied; 'if Maurice is with me.'

"'But are you sure of Maurice? For some time he has been looked upon as rather lukewarm.'

"'Those who say so are totally deceived. Maurice is no more lukewarm in the cause than I am myself.'

"'And you will answer for his fidelity?'

"'As for my own.' I then went to your house, but could not find you at home. I took this road first because it lay in my way, and then I remembered it was the one you usually frequented; so at last we have met. Forward! March!

> "'Where Victory leads us still onward we go,
> Ever joyfully singing we 'll face every foe.'"

"My dear Lorin, I am in despair. I do not feel the slightest taste for this expedition. Say that you were not able to find me."

"Impossible! all our men have seen you."

"Well, then, say you met me, and I was not willing to join you."

"Again impossible."

"But why so?"

"Because this time you will not only be considered lukewarm, but a *suspect;* and you well know the fate of *these suspects.* They are conducted to the Place de la Revolution, and are there invited to salute the statue of Liberty; only instead of saluting with the hat they substitute the head."

"Well, Lorin, I hardly care how soon this fate may befall me; but without doubt it seems strange to you to hear me say so."

Lorin opened his eyes wide, and looked at Maurice.

"Well," said Maurice, "I am weary of life."

Lorin burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ah! ah!" said he, "we have had a quarrel with our beloved, and that fills us with melancholy ideas. Come, my handsome Amadis! let us return to the man, and from that we shall pass to the citizen. As for me I am never a better patriot than when I am embroiled with Arthémise. Apropos, her Divinity the Goddess Reason charged me with a thousand gracious messages for you."

"Pray thank her for me. Adieu, Lorin."

"Adieu! how adieu?"

"Yes, I am going."

"Where are you going?"

"I am going home."

"Maurice, you will ruin yourself."

"I laugh at the idea."

"Maurice, reflect; my friend, reflect!"

"I have done so."

"I have not repeated all —"

"What?"

"That Santerre said to me."

"What did he say?"

"When I asked for you to be chief of this expedition, he said to me, 'Take care!'"

"'Of whom?'

"'Of Maurice.'"

"Of me?"

"Yes, Maurice; and he also added, 'he often goes into that quarter?'"

"Into what quarter?"

"Into that of Maison-Rouge."

"How?" cried Maurice, "is it here he hides himself?"

"They fancy so, since it is here his supposed accomplice resides, the purchaser of the house in the Rue de la Corderie."

"Faubourg Victor?" demanded Maurice.

"Yes; Faubourg Victor."

"And in what street?" —

"In the old Rue Saint Jacques."

"O God!" murmured Maurice, as if struck by a thunderbolt. And he pressed his hand before his eyes. But after a moment's interval, during which he had collected all his courage, —

"What trade?" said he.

"A master-tanner."

"His name?"

"Dixmer."

"You are right, Lorin," said Maurice, by a violent effort controlling his emotion; "I will go with you."

"And you do well; are you armed?"

"I always carry my sword."

"Take also this pair of pistols."

"And you?"

"I have my gun. Carry arms! Shoulder arms! Forward! March!"

The patrol commenced its march, accompanied by

Maurice, who walked near Lorin. They were preceded by a man dressed in gray, who directed their movements. This was an agent of police.

From time to time a shadow might be seen emerging from the angles of the streets or the doors of the houses, who exchanged some words with the man in gray. This was the inspector. On arriving at the little street, the man in gray did not hesitate for an instant. He was well instructed, and entered the street at once. Before the door of the garden where Maurice had been so nearly garroted, he stopped.

"It is here," said he.

"What is here?" demanded Lorin.

"It is here we shall find the two principals."

Maurice supported himself against the wall; he felt as if he were sinking to the ground.

"Now," said the man in gray, "there are three entrances, — the principal entrance, this one, and another which leads into a pavilion. I shall enter with six or eight men through the principal entrance, in the mean time keep guard here with four or five men, and place three sure men at the entrance of the pavilion."

"I will get over the wall," said Maurice, "and watch in the garden."

"The very thing," said Lorin, "as from the interior you can open the door to us."

"Willingly," said Maurice, "but do not clear the passage, or come, till I call you. All that passes in the interior I shall see from the garden."

"You are acquainted with the house, then?" demanded Lorin.

"Some time back I wished to buy it."

Lorin proceeded to conceal his men in the corners of the hedges and angles of the doors, while the agent of

police retired with six or eight National Guards to force his way by the principal entrance. In an instant the noise of their receding steps ceased in the distance, without having awakened the least suspicion. Maurice's men were at their post, and did their best to keep concealed. One would have declared that everything was perfectly quiet, and that nothing extraordinary was passing in the old Rue Saint Jacques. Maurice then began to climb the wall.

"Listen," said Lorin.

"To what?"

"The countersign."

"Right."

"'Carnation and Vault.' Stop all those who cannot give these three words. Permit all to pass who can. This is the password."

"Thanks," said Maurice, dropping from the top of the wall into the garden.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PASSWORD.

The first blow was terrible. It indeed required all Maurice's self-command to enable him to conceal from Lorin how powerfully he was affected by these startling events; but once in the garden, once alone in the silence of night, his mind became more calm, and his ideas, instead of running disordered through his brain, became once more under the control of reason.

What! this house that Maurice had so often visited with the purest pleasure; this house which had formed for him a paradise on earth, — was in reality only a den of sanguinary intrigues. The kind and flattering receptions bestowed on his ardent friendship resulted then from sheer hypocrisy; the love of Geneviève from fear.

The plan of the garden is well-known, our readers having more than once followed our young folks there. Maurice glided from bush to bush till he was shaded from the moon's rays by the little conservatory where he had been imprisoned previous to his first introduction to the house. This conservatory was opposite the pavilion inhabited by Geneviève. But this evening, instead of gleaming stationary from her chamber, the light moved frequently from one window to another. Maurice saw Geneviève through the curtain, evidently raised by accident, hastily packing some things in a portmanteau, and with astonishment beheld some weapons in her hands. He raised himself upon a post to enable him to see

farther into the room. A large fire was blazing on the hearth, where Geneviève was destroying papers.

At this moment the door opened and a young man entered the room. At first Maurice imagined this man was Dixmer. The young woman ran toward him, seized his hands, and they both stood facing each other for a moment, evidently influenced by some deep emotion. What this emotion meant he could not divine, as their words did not reach his hiding-place. But all at once Maurice measured his height with his eye.

"This is not Dixmer," murmured he. Indeed, the man who had entered was small and delicate, while Dixmer was tall and masculine. Jealousy is an active stimulant, and in a second he had compared the figure of this man with that of her husband.

"This is not Dixmer!" murmured he, compelled as it were to repeat it, to convince himself of the perfidy of Geneviève.

He approached still nearer to the window, but the nearer he came the less he saw. His brain was on fire. He stumbled on a ladder; the window was seven or eight feet high. He seized the ladder, and planting it firmly against the wall, ascended and placed his eye at an aperture in the curtain.

Geneviève's unknown visitor was a fair young man, about twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, with blue eyes, and an elegant demeanor; he retained both the young woman's hands within his own, and was speaking soothingly, endeavoring fruitlessly to assuage the grief of Geneviève, which was plainly evinced by the tears which suffused her charming countenance. A slight noise, accidentally made by Maurice, caused the young man to turn his face toward the window. Maurice suppressed a cry of astonishment, he recognized his mys-

terious deliverer of the Place du Chatelet. At this moment Geneviève withdrew her hands from those of the unknown, and went toward the fireplace to ascertain that the papers were utterly consumed.

Maurice could no longer command his indignation. All those fierce passions which torture the heart of man — love, vengeance, and jealousy — lacerated him with their fangs of fire. He at once threw open the ill-closed casement, and vaulted into the chamber. At the same moment two pistols were pressed to his breast.

Geneviève, who had turned round at the noise, on perceiving Maurice stood speechless.

"Sir," said the young Republican, coldly, to him who had a double hold on his life, "you are the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"And what if I am?" replied the Chevalier.

"It is this: you are a brave man, and consequently a cool one, and I would say two words to you."

"Say on," said the Chevalier, without lowering his pistols.

"You can kill me; but you cannot do so before I have uttered a cry, or rather I will not die without giving an alarm. Should I do so, the thousand men who surround this house will have reduced it to ashes ere the lapse of ten minutes; so lower your pistols and listen to what I have to say to the lady."

"To Geneviève?" said the Chevalier.

"To me?" murmured the young woman.

"Yes, to you."

Geneviève, pale as a statue, seized Maurice's arm; but he repulsed her coldly.

"You know what you affirmed, Madame," said Maurice, with profound contempt. "I now see that you told the truth. You indeed do not love Monsieur Morand."

"Maurice! hear me," said Geneviève.

"I have nothing to hear, Madame; you have severed with a single stroke every cord that united my heart with your own. You told me you did not love Morand, but you did not tell me you loved another."

"Sir," said the Chevalier, "what say you of Morand, or rather of what Morand do you speak?"

"Of Morand the chemist."

"Morand the chemist stands before you. Morand the chemist is the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

And extending his hand toward the table, he in an instant resumed the black wig which for so long a period had concealed him from the young Republican.

"Ah, yes," said he, with redoubled disdain, — "yes, I understand. It is not Morand that you love, since Morand does not exist; but the subterfuge, for all its acuteness, is none the less contemptible."

The Chevalier made a threatening movement.

"Sir," said Maurice, "permit me to speak a moment with the lady; join in the conversation if you like; it will not be long, I assure you."

Geneviève, with a gesture, asked Maison-Rouge to have patience.

"Thus, Geneviève, thus," continued Maurice, "you have made me a laughing-stock to my friends and a curse to my party. You have rendered me, blind fool that I was, an instrument in all your plots and an easy tool in your hands. Listen! It was an infamous deed; but you will be punished, Madame, for in five minutes this man, who is going to kill me before your eyes, will be lying dead at your feet; or if his life be spared, it will only be to lose his head upon the scaffold."

"He die!" cried Geneviève; "he lose his head upon the scaffold! But you do not know then, Maurice, that

he is my protector, and that of my family; that I will give my life for his; that if he dies I will die; and that if you are my love, he is my religion!"

"Ah!" said Maurice, "perhaps you still mean to pretend that you love me. Really, women are sadly weak and contemptible."

Then turning to the young Royalist, —

"Now, sir," said he, "you must either kill me or die yourself."

"Why so?"

"Because, if you do not kill me, I shall arrest you."

Maurice extended his hand to seize him by the collar.

"I shall not dispute my life with you," said the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge; and he flung his pistols on a chair.

"And why do you not dispute your life?"

"Because my life is not equivalent in value to the remorse I should experience in feeling that I had killed a brave man, and more than all since Geneviève loves you."

"Ah!" cried the young woman, clasping her hands, "you are always kind, great, loyal, and generous, Armand!"

Maurice regarded them both, almost stupefied with astonishment.

"One moment," said the Chevalier, "allow me to return to my chamber. I give you my word of honor it is not to escape; I wish to conceal a portrait."

Maurice turned his eyes quickly toward that of Geneviève; it hung in its place. Perhaps the Chevalier divined Maurice's thoughts, or perhaps he wished to try his generosity to the utmost.

"Come," said he, "I know you are a Republican, but I know also that you possess a pure and loyal heart. I will trust you to the end. Look!"

And he drew a miniature from his breast, and displayed

it to Maurice. He beheld before him the portrait of the queen. Maurice bowed his head, and rested his forehead on his hand.

"I await your orders, sir," said Maison-Rouge; "if you desire my arrest, knock at this door when it is time for me to give myself up. I care not for my life from the moment it is not sustained by the hope of saving my queen."

The Chevalier quitted the room without a gesture from Maurice offering to detain him.

As he left the chamber Geneviève cast herself at the young man's feet.

"Pardon, Maurice," sobbed she, — "pardon for all the evil I have done. Forgive my deception; forgive me, if only on account of my tears and suffering, for believe me I have wept much and suffered much. My husband left me this morning; I know not where he is gone, and perhaps I may see him no more. And now I have only one friend left, — nay more than friend, a brother, — and you will destroy him. Pardon, Maurice, pardon!"

Maurice raised the young woman.

"What would you?" said he. "There is fatality in all this. Every one stakes his life in these days; the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge has played like all the rest, but he has lost the game, and he must therefore pay."

"That means that he must die, if I understand you rightly?"

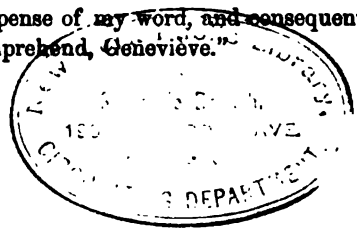
"Yes."

"He must die; and it is you who tell me this?"

"It is not I, Geneviève; it is fatality."

"Fatality has not uttered its last word, since you can save him."

"At the expense of my word, and consequently of my honor. I comprehend, Geneviève."



"Shut your eyes, Maurice; that is all I ask; and as far as a woman may evince her gratitude I will promise you mine."

"I should close my eyes to little purpose, Madame; there is a password given, and without this password no one could go out. Besides, the house, as I have told you, is surrounded."

"And you know the word?"

"Certainly I know it."

"Maurice!"

"Well?"

"Dear friend Maurice, tell me this password; I must know it."

"Geneviève," cried Maurice, "do you mean to say to me, 'Maurice, for the love I bear you, sacrifice your word and your honor, betray your cause, abjure your opinions.' What do you offer me, Geneviève, in exchange for all this, you who tempt me thus?"

"Oh, Maurice, save him, save him first! and then ask of me my life."

"Geneviève," replied Maurice, in a desponding tone, "hear me! I have one foot on the road to infamy; before I make a final descent I wish at least to find a sufficient excuse for so doing. Geneviève, swear to me you do not love the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge!"

"I love him as a sister and a friend; not otherwise, I swear."

"Geneviève, do you love me?"

"Maurice, I do love you; it is true, as God now hears me."

"If I do what you ask me, will you abandon relatives, friends, country, and fly with the traitor?"

"Maurice! Maurice!"

"She hesitates! Oh, she hesitates!"

And he turned from her with all the violence of disdain. Geneviève, who was leaning upon him, feeling suddenly her support give way, fell upon her knees.

"Maurice," said she, wringing her hands, "I will swear to do all that you require of me. Order, and I will obey."

"You will be mine, Geneviève?"

"I will."

"Swear it, by Christ."

Geneviève extended her arms.

"My God," cried she, "thou didst pardon one poor woman who had gone astray; I trust in thy mercy that thou wilt also pardon me."

And the great tears rained down her cheeks, falling upon her long hair hanging dishevelled on her bosom.

"Not thus!" said Maurice, "swear not thus! or I cannot accept that oath."

"O Heaven!" replied she, "I swear to devote my life to Maurice, to die with him, and if requisite, for him, if he will save my friend, my brother, my protector, the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"'T is well: he shall be saved," said Maurice.

And he went toward his chamber.

"Sir," said he, "resume your costume of the tanner Morand; I return your parole, you are free. And you, Madame," said he turning to Geneviève, "this is the password, 'Carnation and Vault.'" And as if horrified to remain in the chamber where he had pronounced the words which constituted him a traitor, he opened the window, and sprang from the room into the garden below.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SEARCH.

MAURICE had returned to his post in the garden, opposite the window of Geneviève, only it was now quite dark, she having left her apartment to enter that of the Chevalier.

It was time Maurice returned, for scarcely had he reached the corner of the conservatory when the garden-door opened, and the man in gray appeared, followed by Lorin, and five or six gendarmes.

"Well?" asked Lorin.

"You see I am at my post," said Maurice.

"And no one has attempted to force past you?" said Lorin.

"No one," replied Maurice, happy to escape by an evasion, from the way in which the question was put to him. "No one. And what have you done?"

"Why, we have acquired the certainty that the Chevalier entered the house an hour ago, and has not left it since," replied the agent of police.

"Do you know his chamber?" said Lorin.

"His room is only separated from that of Madame Dixmer by a corridor."

"Ah! ah!" said Lorin. "It appears this Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is a gallant."

Maurice felt the hot blood rush to his forehead; he closed his eyes, yet saw a thousand internal lights.

"Well, but Citizen Dixmer, what said he to that?" asked Lorin.

"Why, he thought himself highly honored."

"Come," said Maurice, in a choking voice; "upon what do we decide?"

"We have decided," said the police agent, "to arrest him in his chamber, perhaps in his bed."

"He does not, then, suspect anything?"

"Absolutely nothing?"

"What is the ground plan?" inquired Lorin.

"We have an exact plan," said the man in gray. "A pavilion situated at a corner of the garden, there it is; you ascend four steps — do you see them here? — and find yourself on a landing; to the right is the apartment of Madame Dixmer, — no doubt it is that of which we see the window. Facing this window, at the back part, is a door opening on the corridor, and in this corridor the entrance to the chamber of the traitor."

"Well, with so careful a specimen of topography," said Lorin, "we might, I think, easily find our way blindfold, much more with our eyes open. Come on!"

"Are the streets well guarded?" said Maurice, with an interest which the assistants very naturally attributed to his fear lest the Chevalier should escape.

"The streets, the passages, even the crossings," said the man in gray. "I defy any one to pass who has not the watchword."

Maurice shuddered; all these precautions being taken, made him fear that he had uselessly parted with his honor to add to his happiness.

"Now," said the man in gray, "how many men do you require to secure the Chevalier?"

"How many men?" said Lorin. "I hope Maurice and I are sufficient for that. Are we not, Maurice?"

"Yes," murmured the municipal, "we are certainly sufficient."

"Listen!" said the police agent; "no vain boasting. Do you mean to take him?"

"Zounds! Do we mean it?" said Lorin; "I should think so! We are bound to take him, are we not, Maurice?" Lorin laid a stress upon these words, for as he had truly said, suspicion began to settle upon them; and it was not wise to allow time for suspicion, which marched with such rapid strides at this epoch, to assume a firmer consistence, for Lorin well knew that no one would presume to doubt the stanch patriotism of any two men who had captured the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge.

"Well, then," said the police agent, "if you are in earnest, better take three men than two, and four than three, with you. The Chevalier invariably sleeps with pistols under his pillow, and his sword on a table by his side."

"Deuce take it!" said one of the gendarmes of Lorin's company. "Let us go in, without standing on ceremony who should enter first. If he resists, we will cut him to pieces; if he surrender, we will reserve him for the guillotine."

"Well said!" exclaimed Lorin; "do we go in by the door or the window?"

"By the door," said the agent of police; "it may be the key is in the lock, while if we enter by the window we must break some panes, and that would make a noise."

"On for the door, then!" said Lorin; "as long as we enter, it little matters how. Forward! sword in hand, Maurice."

Maurice mechanically drew his sword from the scabbard, and the little troop advanced toward the pavilion. The information of the man in gray proved perfectly correct; they first found the steps, then the landing, and at last entered the vestibule.

"Ah!" cried Lorin, joyfully, "the key is in the door." In short, extending his hand in the dark, his fingers had encountered the cold key.

"Then open it, Citizen Lieutenant," said the man in gray.

Lorin cautiously turned the key in the lock. The door opened. Maurice wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"We shall find him here," said Lorin.

"Not yet," said the man in gray; "if our chart is correct, this is the apartment of Citizeness Dixmer."

"We can soon ascertain that," said Lorin; "light a wax candle; there is some fire in the grate."

"Light the torches," said the man in gray, "they are not so soon extinguished as candles," at the same time taking two torches from the hand of a gendarme, which he lighted by the dying embers. He placed one in the hand of Maurice, the other in that of Lorin. "You see," said he, "I was not deceived; here is the door opening into Citizeness Dixmer's sleeping apartment, and here the one opening into the corridor."

"On, for the corridor!" said Lorin. They opened the door at the farther end, which was not more firmly secured than the first, and found themselves fronting the door of the Chevalier's chamber. Maurice had seen this door twenty times before, and never thought of inquiring where it led to. All his world was centred in the room where he was received by Geneviève.

"Oh! oh!" said Lorin, in a low voice, "here we must change our tactics; no more keys, and the door locked."

"Are you," asked Maurice, hardly able to articulate, "sure that he is here?"

"If our plan is correct, he ought to be here," replied the police agent; "besides, we shall soon see. Gendarmes,

force open the door; and you, citizens, hold yourselves in readiness, and the instant the door is opened, dash into the chamber!"

Four men, selected by the emissary of police, raised the butt-ends of their muskets, and on a signal from the man who conducted this enterprise, gave one blow all together, when the door flew into a thousand fragments.

"Surrender, or you are a dead man!" cried Lorin, rushing into the chamber.

No one replied, and the curtains of the bed were closely drawn.

"Mind the bed!" said the emissary of police; "at the first movement of the curtains, fire!"

"Wait!" said Maurice, "I will open them."

And no doubt in the hope that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge might be concealed behind them, and that it would be his lot to meet the first stab or pistol shot, Maurice hastily pulled apart the curtains, which, creaking along the iron rod, left the tenantless bed exposed to view.

"The devil!" exclaimed Lorin, "there is no one here."

"He must have escaped," murmured Maurice.

"Impossible, citizens, impossible!" cried the man in gray. "I tell you he was seen to enter here an hour ago, and no one has been seen to go out, and all the outlets from the garden are well guarded.

Lorin opened the cabinets, the wardrobes, and looked everywhere, even where it was physically impossible that a man could be concealed.

"You see, however, that no one is here."

"No one!" repeated Maurice, with an emotion easily understood, — "you see no one is here."

"To the chamber of Madame Dixmer," said the police agent, "perhaps he may be there?"

"Oh!" said Maurice, "respect the chamber of a woman."

"Certainly we will respect it," said Lorin, "and Madame Dixmer also, but for all that we must visit it."

"Then," said Maurice, "permit me to pass first."

"Pass on, then," said Lorin, "you are captain: honor the powers that be," and leaving two men to guard the apartment, they returned to that where they had lighted the torches. Maurice approached the door opening into the chamber of Geneviève. It was the first time he had ever entered there. His heart beat violently. The key was in the door. Maurice laid his hand upon the key, but still hesitated.

"Well," said Lorin, "open!"

"But," said Maurice, "if Madame Dixmer should be in bed?"

"We shall look in her bed, under her bed, in the chimney, in the wardrobes, and then if we find no one there but herself, we shall wish her good-night," said Lorin.

"No, not so," said the police agent, "we shall arrest her; Citizeness Geneviève Dixmer is an aristocrat who has been recognized as an accomplice of the girl Tison and the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"Open it yourself, then," said Maurice, "I do not arrest women." The agent of police looked at Maurice, sideways, and the men murmured among themselves.

"Oh, you grumble, do you?" said Lorin; "then you shall have two to grumble about. I am of Maurice's opinion," and he made a step backward.

The man in gray seized the key, opened the door, and the soldiers rushed into the chamber. Two wax lights burned upon a little table, but the chamber of Geneviève, like that of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, was uninhabited.

"Empty!" cried the police agent.

"Empty!" cried Maurice, turning pale; "where is she, then?"

Lorin regarded Maurice with astonishment.

"Let us search," said the agent of police, and closely followed by the military, he began to rummage the house from the cellars to the workshops. At length, when their backs were turned, Maurice, who had followed them impatiently with his eyes, in his turn darted into the chamber, opening the presses, which had already been opened, and calling in a voice replete with anxiety, "Geneviève! Geneviève!" But Geneviève made no reply; the chamber was indeed vacated. Then he began to search the house in a species of frenzy, outhouses, conservatories, sheds, — nothing was omitted, but all without success.

Suddenly a noise was heard, a troop of armed men presented themselves at the door, exchanged the password with the sentinel, entered the garden, and dispersed themselves over the house. At the head of this reinforcement waved the red plume of Santerre.

"Well!" said he to Lorin, "where is the conspirator?"

"How! where is the conspirator?"

"Yes! I asked what have you done with him?"

"I shall ask you that question. If your detachment had guarded the outlets properly, ere this he must have been arrested, since he was not in the house when we entered it."

"What! do you mean to say," cried the furious general, "that you have really allowed the Chevalier to escape?"

"We could not allow him to escape since we have never taken him."

"Then I can comprehend nothing," said Santerre.

"Of what?" said Lorin.

"Of the message you sent me by your envoy."

"We sent you an envoy!"

"Yes; a man in a brown coat, with black hair, and green spectacles, who came from you to inform me you were on the eve of capturing Maison-Rouge, but that he was defending himself like a lion; upon hearing which I hastened to your assistance."

"A man in a brown coat, black hair, and green spectacles?" repeated Lorin.

"Yes, with a female on his arm."

"Young and pretty?" cried Maurice, glancing toward the general.

"Yes, young and pretty."

"It was he and Madame Dixmer," said Maurice.

"What, he!" exclaimed Santerre. "Maison-Rouge! Oh, blockhead that I was not to have killed them both! Come, Citizen Lindey, we may capture them yet."

"But how the devil;" asked Lorin, "came you to let them pass?"

"Zounds!" said Santerre, "I let them pass because they gave the password."

"They had the password?" exclaimed Lorin; "then there is surely a traitor among us!"

"No, no, Citizen Lorin; you are known, and we well know that there are no traitors among you."

Lorin looked around him as if to detect the miscreant, and publicly proclaim his shame. He encountered the gloomy face and wandering eye of Maurice.

"Ah!" murmured he, "what means this?"

"The man cannot be very far off," said Santerre; "let us search the environs; perhaps he has fallen in with some patrol who, more wide awake than we, did not allow themselves to be gulled so easily."

"Yes, yes; let us search," said Lorin; and, under

the pretence of so doing, he seized Maurice by the arm, and drew him into the garden.

"Yes, let us search," said the soldiers; "but before we search —" and one of them flung his still burning torch into an adjacent shed, filled with bundles of fagots and dried herbs.

"Come," said Lorin, "come!"

Maurice offered no resistance. He followed Lorin like a child; they both ran as far as the bridge without speaking; there they stopped, and Maurice turned round. The sky was red from the horizon to the Faubourg, and above the houses ascended innumerable sparks.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FIRE.

MAURICE shuddered as he extended his hand toward the Rue Saint Jacques.

"The fire!" said he, — "the fire!"

"Yes," said Lorin, "the fire; what then?"

"Gracious Heavens! if she has returned."

"Who?"

"Geneviève."

"Geneviève means Madame Dixmer, does it not?"

"Yes."

"There is no danger of her return; she did not go away for that purpose."

"Lorin, I must find her. I will have my revenge."

"Oh, oh!" said Lorin.

> "None can escape thy puissant sceptre, Love.
> Thou reign'st on earth and in the heavens above."

"You will assist me in my search, will you not, Lorin?"

"Zounds! there will be no difficulty in that."

"Why so?"

"Without doubt, if you are so much interested, as to me you appear to be, in Madame Dixmer's fate, you, being intimate with her, ought, knowing her, also to know her friends. She has not quitted Paris; her friends have every motive to stay; she has taken refuge in the house of some confidential acquaintance, and to-morrow morn-

ing you will receive a billet by some 'Rose,' or some 'Marton,' couched as follows, —

> "Wouldst see again, my Mars, thy Venus true?
> Borrow of Night her scarf of azure hue.

And requesting you to present yourself at the porter's lodge, such a number, such a street, and to inquire for Madame Three-stars; that is all."

Maurice shrugged his shoulders; he well knew there was no one with whom Geneviève could take refuge.

"We shall not find her," said he.

"Will you permit me to say one thing, Maurice?"

"What?"

"That it will be no great misfortune if we should not find her."

"If we do not, Lorin, I shall die."

"The devil!" exclaimed the young man; "it was, then, of this love that you lately so nearly died."

"Yes," replied Maurice.

Lorin reflected an instant. "Maurice," said he, "it is now nearly eleven o'clock; this quarter is deserted; here is a stone seat, particularly adapted for the reception of two friends. Accord me the favor of a private interview, as they used to say, under the ancient régime. I give you my word of honor that I shall speak only in prose."

They seated themselves upon the bench.

"Speak!" said Maurice, resting his aching head upon his hand.

"Without exordium, periphrasis, or commentary, I tell you one thing, old fellow, — it is this, that we are ruining ourselves, or rather that you are ruining us."

"How so?" demanded Maurice.

"There is, my friend, a decree issued by the Com

mittee of Public Safety, which declares every man a traitor to his country who enters into any relationship with the acknowledged enemies of the said country. Eh! do you know this decree?"

"To be sure I do," replied Maurice.

"Well, it seems to me, you are not a vile traitor to your country. What say you? as Manlius says."

"Lorin!"

"Undoubtedly; unless you believe that those idolize their country who give house-room, bed, and board to Monsieur le Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, who is not a high Republican, as I suppose, and has not been accused at any time of having taken part in the days of September."

"Ah! Lorin," said Maurice, sighing heavily.

"Still, it appears to me," continued the moralist, "that you have been, and still are, too intimate with the enemies of your country. Come! Come, friend Maurice, do not rebel! you are like the whilom Enceladus; you move a mountain each time you turn yourself."

Lorin pronounced these words in the kindest manner possible, and glossed them over with an artifice truly Ciceronian.

Maurice merely made a gesture of dissent, but the gesture was unheeded, and Lorin continued, —

"If we exist in a green-house temperature, a healthy atmosphere, where, according to botanic rules, the barometer invariably points to sixteen degrees, I should say, my dear Maurice, that this is elegant, satisfactory; what though we are occasionally rather aristocratic, we flourish and do well. But if scorched in a heat of thirty-five or forty degrees, the sap burns, so that it rises slowly, and from the excess of heat seems cold; when cold, then comes the blight of suspicion, — you know this, Maurice, — and once suspected, you possess too much good sense

not to know what we shall be, or rather that ere long we shall be no more."

"Well, then," said Maurice, "they can kill me, and there will be an end of me, for I am weary of my life."

"For the last quarter of an hour," said Lorin; "indeed scarcely so long that I should leave you to act according to your own pleasure on this subject; and then to die now, it is necessary to die a Republican while you would die an aristocrat."

"Ah!" said Maurice, whose blood began to boil from impassioned grief, resulting from the consciousness of his own criminality, "you go too far, friend Lorin."

"I shall go farther still, and forewarn you, that if you turn aristocrat — "

"You will denounce me?"

"For shame! No. I will confine you in a cellar, and have you sought after to the sound of the drum, like something lost; then I will proclaim that the aristocrats, knowing what you had in reserve for them, had seized, victimized, and starved you, so that, like Provost Élie de Beaumont, Monsieur Latude, and others, when found, you will be publicly crowned with flowers by the ladies of La Halle, and the ragpickers of Section Victor. Make haste, then, to appear again an Aristides, else your business is concluded."

"Lorin! Lorin! I feel that you are right; but I am dragged along. I am sliding down the precipice. Are you displeased with me, because my fate drags me onward?"

"I am not displeased with you, but I shall remonstrate with you. Call to mind a few of the scenes enacted daily between Pylades and Orestes, — scenes which prove beyond all doubt that friendship is a paradox, since these model friends quarrelled without ceasing."

"Leave me to my fate, Lorin, you had much better do so."

"I will never abandon you."

"Then, allow me to love, to be mad, at my ease; to be criminal, perhaps, for if I again see her, I fear I shall kill her."

"Or fall upon your knees. Ah, ah, Maurice, Maurice, to love an aristocrat, I never could have credited it! It is like poor Osselin with the Marquise de Charny."

"No more, Lorin, I beseech you."

"Maurice, I will cure you, or may the Devil take me! I do not wish you to be drawn in the lottery of Saint Guillotine, as the grocer of the Rue des Lombards observes. Maurice, you will exasperate me! Maurice, you will render me bloodthirsty! I feel as if I wanted to set fire to the isle of Saint Louis! A torch! a firebrand!

> "The toil were idle. Maurice, thy passion dire
> Sufficient is Paris to set on fire."

Maurice smiled in spite of himself.

"You know," said he, "that it was agreed between us that we should speak only in prose."

"But you exasperate me with your folly," said Lorin. "Drink, Maurice, become a drunkard, do anything, study political economy; but for the love of Jupiter, let us fall in love with nothing but Liberty!"

"Or Reason?"

"Ah! that is true; by the way, the Goddess Reason talks much about you. She thinks you are a charming mortal."

"Are you not jealous?"

"Maurice, to save a friend I feel capable of any sacrifice."

"Thanks, my poor Lorin, and I truly appreciate your

devotion; but the best way to console me is to leave me to sate my grief. Adieu! Lorin, go to your Arthémise."

"And you; where are you going?"

"I shall return home."

And Maurice turned toward the bridge.

"You live, then, in the direction of the old Rue Saint Jacques now?"

"No; but it pleases me to go that way."

"To look once again upon the place inhabited by your fair inconstant?"

"To see if she has not returned where she knows I am awaiting her. Ah, Geneviève! Geneviève! I could not have believed you capable of so much deceit!"

"Maurice, a tyrant who well knew the fair sex, since he died from having loved them too well, said, —

"'Woe to the man who trusts his heart
To woman, changeful as the breeze.'"

Maurice sighed, and the two friends took the road to the old Rue Saint Jacques.

As they approached they heard a great noise, and saw the light increase; they listened to patriotic chants, which on a brilliant day in the glorious sunshine, or in the atmosphere of combat, sounded like hymns of heroism, but which by the red light of an incendiary fire savored more of the diabolic incantations of drunken cannibals.

"Oh, my God! my God!" cried Maurice, forgetting that God had been abolished, as he wiped the perspiration from his face.

Lorin watched him attentively and muttered, —

"Alas! when caught in Cupid's snare,
To Prudence we must bid adieu."

All the inhabitants of Paris appeared moving toward the theatre of the events we have just narrated. Maurice was obliged to cross a hedge formed by the gendarmes, the ranks of the sections, then the impetuous crowd of this always furious populace, at this epoch easily aroused, and who ran howling from spectacle to spectacle without intermission. As they approached, Maurice impatiently hastened his steps; Lorin, with some trouble, kept close behind him, for he did not like to leave his friend to himself at such a moment.

It was nearly all over. The fire had communicated from the shed where the soldier had flung his torch to the workshops, constructed of planks so put together as to allow the free circulation of air; the merchandise was consumed, and the house itself was now in flames.

"O God!" said Maurice to himself, "if she has returned, should she find herself in a chamber encircled by the devouring element, waiting for me, calling on me —" and Maurice, nearly insensible from grief, liked better to think of the folly of those he loved than of his treason. He rushed headlong toward the door, of which he caught a glimpse through the mass of burning flame. Lorin still followed him. He would have followed him to the infernal regions. The roof was in flames; the fire had now indeed commenced its work of destruction on the staircase. Maurice hastened to visit the first floor, the parlor, the chamber of Geneviève, of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, and the corridors, calling, in stifled accents, "Geneviève! Geneviève!"

No one replied. On returning from the search our two friends saw volumes of flame now entering the door; but not heeding the shouts of Lorin, who pointed to the window, Maurice passed through the flames, then ran to the house, crossed, notwithstanding all impediments, a

court-yard strewed with broken furniture, searched the dining-room, Dixmer's parlor, Morand's laboratory, — all filled with smoke, fragments, and broken glass. The fire had reached this part of the house, and the work of destruction would soon be complete. Maurice, as in the pavilion, did not omit visiting a single chamber, or leave unexamined even a corridor. He then descended to the cellars; perhaps Geneviève had taken refuge from the fire there. He found no one.

"Zounds!" said Lorin; "no one but a salamander could take refuge here, and it is not that fabulous animal that you are in search of. Let us go; we can make inquiry in this assemblage. Some one has perhaps seen her."

It needed all Lorin's force to drag away Maurice; hope still detained him there.

Then they commenced their investigation; they visited the environs, stopped all the females who passed, searched all the alleys, without any result. It was now one o'clock in the morning, and Maurice, notwithstanding his athletic vigor, was overpowered and broken down with fatigue, and at length desisted from his worse than useless efforts.

A carriage passed; Lorin hailed it.

"Come, bear up, old fellow," said he to Maurice; "we have done all in the range of human possibility to recover Geneviève. We have broken our backs, been roasted, and have been cruelly cuffed for her. Cupid, however exacting he may be, could require no more from a man in love, and above all, from one who is not. So jump into the carriage, and let us return home."

Maurice submitted without making any reply. They arrived at Maurice's door without either of the friends having uttered a single word. As Maurice descended

from the carriage, they heard a window of his apartment closed.

"All right!" said Lorin, "he is waiting; I shall rest easy now. Knock, however."

Maurice knocked, the door opened.

"Good-night!" said Lorin, "wait for me to-morrow morning to go out!"

"Good-night," said Maurice, mechanically, as the door closed behind him. Upon the first steps of the staircase he met his official.

"Ah! Citizen Lindey," he exclaimed, "how much uneasiness you have caused us!" The word *us* struck Maurice.

"You?" said he.

"Yes, me and the little lady who is waiting for you."

"The little lady," repeated Maurice, feeling the moment ill-chosen to remind him of his former loves; "you were right to tell me. I shall sleep at Lorin's."

"That is impossible; she was at the window, and saw you alight, and cried out, 'There he is!'"

"What care I whether she knows I am here or not? I have no heart for love. Go upstairs, and tell this woman she is mistaken."

The official made a movement as if to obey him, then stopped.

"Ah! Citizen," said he, "you are wrong. The little lady is already very sad; your message will drive her to despair."

"But," asked Maurice, "who is this woman?"

"Citizen, I have not seen her face; it is concealed by her mantle, and she weeps, that is all I know."

"She weeps!" exclaimed Maurice.

"Yes, but very softly, stifling her sobs."

"She weeps," repeated Maurice; "there is then some one in the world who loves me sufficiently to feel anxious in my absence?" and he ascended slowly behind the official.

"Here he is, Citizen, here he is!" cried the latter, rushing into the chamber. Maurice entered behind him.

He then beheld in a corner of the room the trembling form of a woman whose face was hid in the cushions, and whom he would have thought dead, but for her convulsive moaning, which made him start. He signed to his official to leave the room, who went out, closing the door behind him. Then Maurice ran to the young woman, who raised her head.

"Geneviève!" cried the young man, "Geneviève here! good Heavens! am I then mad?"

"No, you are in possession of your senses, my friend," replied the young woman. "I promised to be yours if you would save the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. You have saved him, and I am here; I was awaiting you."

Maurice mistook the meaning of these words; he recoiled a step, and looked sadly at the young woman.

"Geneviève," said he, "you do not love me."

Geneviève regarded him with tearful eyes; then turning from him, leaned her head on the pillow of the sofa, and gave free vent to her sobs and tears.

"Alas!" said Maurice, "it is evident that you no longer love me; and not only that you love me no more, Geneviève, but that you must entertain a feeling of hatred toward me, to experience this despair."

Maurice had spoken so nobly, yet with so much feeling, that Geneviève arose and took his hand.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said she, "and is it ever thus that those we think the best prove merely egotists?"

"Egotists, Geneviève! what do you mean?"

"Can you not then imagine what I suffer? My husband a fugitive, my brother proscribed, our house in flames, and all this in one night; and then that dreadful scene between you and the Chevalier was added to the rest!"

Maurice listened with delight, for it was impossible even for the maddest passion not to admit that this accumulation of trouble was more than sufficient excuse for Geneviève's deep and violent grief.

"And now you are come, I shall keep you; you shall leave me no more!"

Geneviève started.

"Where should I go?" replied she, with bitterness. "Have I an asylum, a shelter, a protector, save he who has put a price upon his protection? Oh, rash and foolish that I am! I stepped over the Pont Neuf, Maurice, and in passing I stopped to gaze at the dark water, dashing angrily against the corners of the arches; it attracted and fascinated me. Then said I to myself, there, poor woman, is a shelter for you; there inviolable repose and oblivion!"

"Geneviève! Geneviève!" cried Maurice, "you said that? Then you do not love me?"

"I said it," replied Geneviève, — "I said it; but I am here."

Maurice drew a deep breath, and fell at her feet.

"Geneviève," murmured he, "weep no more! Geneviève, console yourself for all your grief, since you love me. Tell me, Geneviève, for the sake of Heaven! that it was not the violence of my menaces that brought you hither. Assure me that even had you not seen me this evening, on finding yourself alone, isolated, and without an asylum, you would have come to me; and accept the

oath which I now make you, to annul the one that I compelled you to take."

Geneviève looked down upon the young man with an expression of ineffable gratitude. "Generous!" said she; "Oh, my God! I thank thee, he is generous."

"Listen, Geneviève!" said Maurice. "God, whom they have here driven from their temples, but whom they cannot expel from our hearts, where he has implanted love, has made this evening in appearance dark and gloomy, but conceals behind its sombre curtain a silvery cloud. God has conducted you to me, Geneviève, and speaks to you through me. God is at length willing to compensate us for all the sufferings we have endured, for the virtue we have displayed in combating this love, as if this sentiment so long entertained, and so profound, could be a crime! Weep no more, Geneviève, weep no more; give me your hand! Do you wish to live in the house of your brother? Do you wish he should kiss the hem of your robe, and pass over the threshold of his door without turning his head? Well, say but the word, make but one sign, and I am gone, and you are free. But on the other hand, my adored Geneviève, will you call to mind that I have loved you so ardently that I had almost died of this love, which it remains with you to render so fatal or so fortunate to me; that for this love I have been a traitor to my party, and am become vile and contemptible in my own eyes, — will you now consider all the happiness which the future has in store for us, the strength and energy which our youth and love possess to defend this happiness, now but in the bud, from all who would dare attack it? Ah! Geneviève, what will you reply? You who are an angel of mercy, will you render a man so happy that he no longer regrets life, and ceases to desire eternal felicity? Then, instead of repelling me, smile, my Gene-

vière; let me place your hand upon my heart, and incline toward one who worships you from the inmost recesses of his soul. Geneviève, my love, my life, do not take back your vow!"

The heart of the young woman swelled at these words. The fatigue of her late suffering had worn out her strength, and though her tears no longer flowed, occasional sobs relieved her overcharged bosom.

Maurice saw that she no longer had the force to resist, and seized her in his arms. Then she let her head fall on his shoulder, and her long hair brushed against her lover's burning cheeks.

At the same time Maurice felt the heaving of her chest, still disturbed like the ocean after a storm.

"You still weep, my Geneviève," continued Maurice, with profound melancholy, — "you still weep. Oh, reassure yourself! I will never impose my love on scornful grief, and never soil my lips with a kiss empoisoned by a single tear of regret."

He unwound the living girdle of her arms, averted his face, and coldly turned away.

But as quick as thought, in a moment of reaction so natural in a woman who struggles contrary to her own inclination, Geneviève threw her trembling arms around Maurice's neck, pressed him nervously to her heart, and laid her cold cheek, still wet with the tears which had ceased to flow, against the young man's burning one.

"Ah, Maurice!" murmured Geneviève, "do not abandon me, Maurice; I have no one left me in the world but you!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE MORROW.

A BEAUTIFUL sun beamed across the green window-blinds, gilding the leaves of three large roses placed in a flower-stand before the window of Maurice. These flowers, more precious as the season was on the decline, perfumed with a delicious fragrance the little dining-room of spotless neatness, where at a table served with every elegancy, but without profusion, sat Maurice and Geneviève. The door was closed, for as the table contained all that was requisite, it was understood they waited on themselves. They heard the official stirring in the adjoining room. The warmth and life of the last few lovely days entered through the half-open jalousie, making glitter like emeralds and rubies the rose-leaves caressed by the rays of the sun.

Geneviève let fall upon her plate the golden fruit she held in her hand. She appeared to be deep in thought, and smiling only with her lips, while her eyes languished with a melancholy expression. She remained thus silent, abstracted, and happy in the sun of her love, as the beautiful flowers in the sun of heaven. Soon her eyes sought those of Maurice, and encountered his gazing upon her. She placed her soft white arm upon the young man's shoulder, and leaned on his breast with that faith and confidence far exceeding love.

Geneviève looked at him without speaking, and blushed as she regarded him. Maurice slightly inclined his head

to imprint a kiss upon the half-open lips of Geneviève. He bent his head, while she turned pale, and closed her eyes as the delicate flower conceals its calyx from the rays of light. They remained dreaming thus, when a sharp ring at the door-bell suddenly startled them.

The official entered mysteriously, and closed the door.

"Here is the Citizen Lorin," said he.

"Ah! dear Lorin," said Maurice, "I will go and dismiss him. Pardon, Geneviève."

Geneviève stopped him.

"Dismiss your friend, Maurice!" said she, "and such a friend! one who has consoled, assisted, and sustained you? No; I would no more drive such a friend from your house than from your heart. Let him come in, Maurice; let him come in."

"With your permission?" said Maurice.

"I wish it," said Geneviève.

"Ah! you will find that to love you is not enough," cried Maurice, delighted with her delicacy; "it is necessary to adore you!"

Geneviève held her blushing face to the young man. He opened the door, and Lorin entered, smart as usual in his costume of demi-muscadin. On perceiving Geneviève he manifested great surprise, which was succeeded by a respectful salute.

"Come here, Lorin, come here, and look at the lady! You are dethroned, Lorin. I have now some one I prefer to yourself. I would have given my life for you; for her, — I tell you nothing new, Lorin, — for her I have sacrificed my honor."

"Madame," replied Lorin, in accents of deep emotion, "I shall endeavor to value Maurice the more, that he has not altogether ceased to care for me."

"Sit down, sir," said Geneviève, smiling.

"Yes, sit down," said Maurice, who, having pressed in his right hand that of his friend, and in his left that of his mistress, presented the appearance of a man arrived at the height of human felicity.

"Then you do not wish to die now; do not wish any longer to kill yourself?"

"What do you mean?" asked Geneviève, turning pale.

"Oh, in good truth!" said Lorin, "man is a most versatile animal, and philosophers have good cause to despise his levity. Here is one, would you believe it, Madame, who no longer ago than yesterday evening wished to leap into the fire, throw himself into the water; who declared there was no more happiness for him in this world. And behold him this morning, gay, joyous, with a smile upon his lips, his countenance resplendent with happiness, life in his heart, seated at a well-furnished table; it is true he has not eaten much, but that does not prove he is unhappy."

"Did he wish to do all this?" said Geneviève.

"All this, and much more. I will tell you all, some day, but at this moment I am very hungry; it is all Maurice's fault for making me yesterday evening run all over the Quarter Saint Jacques. Permit me, then, to make an attack upon the breakfast, which I perceive you have neither of you yet touched."

"That is right," said Maurice, with childish glee; "I have not breakfasted, nor have you, Geneviève."

He watched Lorin's eyes as he uttered her name; but Lorin evinced no surprise.

"Ah!" said Maurice, "you have already surmised who it is, Lorin."

"Zounds!" said Lorin, cutting himself a large slice of white and rosy ham, and not seeming to hear Maurice's remark.

"I, also, am hungry," said Geneviève, holding her plate.

"Lorin," said Maurice, "I was ill yesterday."

"You were worse than ill; you were mad."

"Well, I think it is you who are suffering at this moment."

"Why?"

"You have not yet given us any verses."

"I will sing you one this moment," said Lorin, —

> "Phœbus, in the midst of the Graces,
> The lyre in his hand still retained,
> Till following of Venus the traces,
> 'T was lost, and could not be regained."

"Always ready with a quatrain," said Maurice, laughing.

"And you will have to be contented with it, as it is now necessary to turn our attention to more serious affairs."

"Has anything new occurred, then?" said Maurice, anxiously.

"I am ordered on guard at the Conciergerie."

"At the Conciergerie!" said Geneviève, "near the queen?"

"Near the queen. I believe so, Madame."

Geneviève turned pale. Maurice frowned, and made a sign to Lorin, who cut himself another slice of ham, double the size of the first. The queen had indeed been removed to the Conciergerie, whither we shall follow her.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CONCIERGERIE.

At a corner of the Pont au Change and of the Quai aux Fleurs rose the remains of the old palace of Saint Louis, called *par excellence* the palace, as Rome is called the city, and which still continues to retain the royal cognomen, when the only kings who inhabit it are the registrars, the judges, and the pleaders.

The house of justice was a large and sombre building, exciting more fear than love for the merciless goddess. There might be seen united in this narrow space all the instruments and attributes of human vengeance. The first wards were assigned to those who had been arraigned for crime; farther on were the halls of judgment, and lower down the dungeons of the condemned. By the door was a small space where the red-hot iron stamped its mark of infamy; and about one hundred and fifty paces from the first another space, far more extensive, where the last act of the fearful tragedy took place, — that is to say, La Grève, where they finished the work previously sketched out for them at the Palace. Justice, as we see, reigned paramount over all.

All these portions of the edifice joined one with another, sullen-looking, dark, and gray, pierced by iron-grated windows where the gaping arches resemble the grated dens extending along the side of the Quai des Lunettes. This is the Conciergerie.

This prison contains dens washed by the black mud from the waters of the Seine; it also possesses mysterious outlets, through which were formerly conducted to the river those miserable victims whom it was thought necessary to remove.

As seen in 1793, the Conciergerie, unwearying *procureur* for the scaffold, — the Conciergerie overflowed with occupants, who within an hour became the victims of the guillotine. At this epoch the old prison of Saint Louis was literally the Inn of Death. Under the arches some gates were hung, and at night a red lantern was suspended there, fit emblem of this abode of misery and despair.

The evening preceding the day when Lorin, Maurice, and Geneviève were breakfasting together, a dull rumbling shook the pavement of the quay and rattled the windows of the prison, then ceased before the arched gate. The gendarmes knocked with the handles of their swords, the gate opened, and a carriage entered the court; when the hinges had turned, and the rusty bolts had creaked, a female descended.

The gaping wicket opened immediately to receive her, and closed upon her. Three or four curious heads protruding to gaze upon the prisoner by the light of the torches, appeared in mezzo-tinto, then vanished in the darkness, while vulgar jokes and rude laughter passed between the men leaving, who could be heard though not seen.

The person thus brought remained within the first wicket with the gendarmes; she saw it would be necessary to pass through a second, but forgot at the same time to raise the foot and lower the head, as there is a step to ascend and a beam which descends. The prisoner, not yet well habituated to prison architecture, notwithstanding her long sojourn there, omitted

to stoop, and struck her forehead violently against the bar.

"Are you much hurt, Citizeness?" demanded one of the gendarmes.

"Nothing can hurt me now," she replied tranquilly, and passed on without uttering a single complaint, although sanguinary traces of the injury remained upon her brow.

Shortly the arm-chair of the keeper became visible, — a chair more venerated by the prisoners than the throne of the king by his courtiers; for the keeper of a prison is the dispenser of favor, and all mercy is important to a prisoner, as sometimes the smallest kindness may change the darkest gloom to a heaven of light.

The keeper Richard, installed in his arm-chair, felt a due perception of his own importance. He remained undisturbed even when the rumbling of the carriage announced a new arrival. He inhaled some snuff, regarded the prisoner, opened a large register, and looked for a pen in the little ink-horn of black wood, where the ink, incrusted on the sides, retained in the centre a mouldy humidity, as in the midst of the crater of a volcano there always remains some melted matter.

"Citizen Keeper," said the chief of the escort, "write, and write quickly, for they are impatiently awaiting us at the Commune."

"I will not be long," said the porter, at the same time emptying into the inkstand some drops of wine remaining at the bottom of his glass; "I am a good hand at this, thank God! Your name and surname, Citizen,' said he, and dipping his pen at the same time into this improvised ink, he commenced entering the new arrival at the bottom of a page already nearly filled; while standing behind his chair, Madame Richard, a female of benevolent

aspect, contemplated, with a mixture of astonishment and respect, this woman, so sad, so noble, and so proud, whom her husband interrogated.

"Marie Antoinette Jeanne Josèphe de Lorraine," replied the prisoner, "Archduchess of Austria and Queen of France."

"Queen of France!" repeated the keeper, raising himself in astonishment by the arms of his chair.

"Queen of France," repeated the prisoner, in the same voice.

"Otherwise called the Widow Capet," said the chief of the escort.

"Under which of these names am I to enter her?" demanded the keeper.

"Whichever you please, only do it quickly," said the chief of the escort.

The keeper reseated himself, and with a trembling hand wrote down the name, surname, and titles given him by the prisoner, inscriptions the ink of which still appears visible to this day upon the register of which the revolutionary rats of the Conciergerie have nibbled the leaf at its most precious part.

Richard's wife still retained her position behind her husband's chair, and remained standing with her hands clasped together, commiserating the situation of the unfortunate being before her.

"Your age?" continued the keeper.

"Thirty-seven years and nine months," replied the queen.

Richard wrote this down, then the description, and finished with the regular notes and forms.

"There," said he, "that is completed."

"Where shall we conduct the prisoner?" said the chief of the escort.

Richard helped himself to a second pinch of snuff, and looked at his wife.

"Indeed," said she, "we did not anticipate this, and have had but brief notice, so that we hardly know —"

"You must find out," said the brigadier.

"There is the council chamber," said Richard's wife.

"Too large," murmured Richard.

"The larger the better; we can the more easily place the guards."

"Go to the council chamber," said Richard. "But it is not habitable at this moment; it has no bed."

"True," replied his wife, "I had quite forgotten that."

"Bah!" said one of the gendarmes, "you can put a bed there to-morrow, and to-morrow will soon be here."

"Besides, the citizen could occupy our chamber for one night; could she not, good man?" said Richard's wife.

"And what are we to do?" said the keeper.

"Oh, we can do without a bed for one night; and as the citizen gendarme observes, 'the night is nearly gone.'"

"Then," said Richard, "conduct the citizeness to our chamber."

"And in the mean while you will prepare our receipt?"

"It shall be ready on your return."

Richard's wife took the candle from the table, and led the way.

Marie Antoinette followed without uttering a word, calm and pale as usual. Two turnkeys, at a sign from Richard's wife, followed them. The queen was shown her bed, on which the woman hastened to place clean sheets. The turnkeys installed themselves outside; the door was double-locked; and Marie Antoinette was left alone.

How she passed that night no one ever knew, as she

passed it in close communion with her God. On the next day the queen was conducted to the council chamber, a long four-sided room, the wicket-door of which opened upon a corridor of the Conciergerie, and which had been divided in its whole length by a partition which did not reach the height of the ceiling.

One of these compartments was occupied by the men on guard. The other was the chamber of the queen. A window, thickly-grated with small iron bars, lighted both these cells. A folding-screen, the substitute for a door, secluded the queen from the guards, and closed the aperture in the middle. The whole of this room was paved with brick. The walls, at one period or another, had been covered with gilded wood, where still hung some shreds of paper fleur-de-lis. A bed was placed opposite the window, and a single chair near the light. This was all the furniture the royal prison contained.

On entering, the queen requested that her books and work might be brought her. They brought her the "Revolutions of England," which she had commenced in the Temple, the "Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis," and her tapestry.

The gendarmes established themselves in the adjoining compartment. History has preserved their names, as it has done that of many others more infamous, associated by destiny in great events, and who see reflected on themselves a fragment of that light cast by the thunderbolt which destroys the thrones of kings, perhaps even the kings themselves.

They were called Duchesne and Gilbert.

These two men were selected by the Commune, who knew them to be stanch patriots. They were to remain at their post in their cell till the sentence of Marie Antoinette. They hoped by this measure to avoid the

irregularities consequent upon a change of office several times during the day, and therefore laid the guards under a heavy responsibility.

The queen first became acquainted with this new regulation from the conversation of the gendarmes, whose discourse, not being softly uttered, reached her ears. She experienced at once joy and disquietude; for if on the one hand she felt that these men ought to be trustworthy since they had been chosen from a multitude, on the other side she reflected that her friends might more easily corrupt two known men at their post than a hundred unknown individuals selected by chance, passing near her occasionally, and then only for a single day.

On the first night before she retired one of the gendarmes, according to his usual custom, began to smoke. The noxious vapor glided imperceptibly through the apertures of the partition, enveloping the unfortunate queen, whose misfortunes had irritated instead of deadening her nerves. She soon felt herself seized with nausea and swimming in the head; but true to her indomitable system of firmness, she uttered no complaint.

During her melancholy vigil, while nothing disturbed the deep silence of the night, she fancied she heard plaintive cries outside. These cries were mournful and prolonged; there was about them something weird and piercing, like the howling of wind in the dark and deserted corridor when the tempest borrows the human voice to animate the passions of the elements.

She soon became aware that the noise that had at first startled her was the doleful and persevering cry of a dog howling on the quay. She immediately remembered her poor little Jet, whom she had not thought of when they removed her from the Temple, and now believed she

could recognize his voice. Indeed, the poor little animal, who by his mistaken vigilance had ruined his mistress, had unperceived descended behind her, had followed the carriage as far as the grating of the Conciergerie, where he continued till he narrowly escaped being cut in two by the double iron portcullis which closed behind her.

But the faithful creature had soon returned, and comprehending that his mistress was confined in this great stone building, he whined and howled, waiting, within ten feet of the sentinel, a caressing reply. The queen replied by a heart-broken sigh which reached the ears of her guards; but as this sigh was not repeated, and no other sound proceeded from the queen's chamber, they again composed themselves, and relapsed into their former state of drowsiness.

At break of day the queen rose and dressed herself, then took her seat near the window, the light from which, intercepted by the grating of iron bars, fell with a bluish tint upon her emaciated hands, in which she held a book. She was apparently reading, but her thoughts were far away.

The Gendarme Gilbert half opened the screen, and regarded her in silence. The queen heard the noise of the screen, but did not turn her head. She was so seated that the gendarme could see her head bathed in the morning light. Gilbert made a sign to his comrade to advance and look through the opening with him. Duchesne approached.

"Look!" said Gilbert, in a low tone; "how very pale she is; it is frightful! Those red circles round her eyes denote her suffering. She has surely been weeping."

"You well know," said Duchesne, "Capet's widow never weeps. She is too proud for that."

"Then she must be ill," said Gilbert, and raising his voice, "Tell me, Citizen Capet," said he, "are you ill?"

The queen slowly raised her eyes, and fixed an inquiring look upon the two men.

"Did you address me, gentlemen?" demanded she, in a voice full of sweetness, for she fancied she detected the accent of kindness in him who had spoken to her.

"Yes, Citizeness, we spoke to you," replied Gilbert; "we feared you were ill."

"Why so?"

"Because your eyes are so red."

"And at the same time you are so pale," added Duchesne.

"Thank you, gentlemen, I am not ill; only I suffered much last night."

"Ah, yes, your misfortunes!"

"No, gentlemen, my miseries are always the same; and my religion having taught me to carry them to the foot of the cross, I do not suffer more one day than another. No; I am out of sorts because I could not rest last night."

"Ah! your new lodging and different bed?" said Duchesne.

"And then the lodging is not very comfortable," added Gilbert.

"Ah! it is not that, gentlemen," said the queen, shaking her head. "Lofty or lowly, it is all the same to me."

"What is it then?"

"I ask pardon for telling you; but I have suffered much inconvenience from the smell of the tobacco which that gentleman is smoking at this moment."

Indeed, Gilbert was smoking, which was his habitual occupation.

"Confound my stupidity!" cried he, much grieved from the kindness with which the queen had expressed herself. "Why did you not tell me so before, Citizen?"

"Because I thought, sir, I had no right to deprive you of any enjoyment."

"Well, you shall be incommoded no more, — by me, at least," said Gilbert, casting away his pipe, which broke upon the tiles, "for I shall smoke no more."

He turned round, his companion followed, and he closed the screen.

"Possibly they may cut off her head, that is an affair of the nation; but why should we cause her any suffering, poor woman? We are soldiers, and not hangmen, like Simon."

"It rather savors of the aristocrat, comrade, what you did just now," said Duchesne, shaking his head.

"Whom do you term an aristocrat? Explain yourself!"

"I call aristocrats all those who annoy the nation, and succor its enemies."

"Then, according to your theory, I annoy the nation because I cease to annoy with my smoking the Widow Capet? Go along, then! As for me," continued the brave fellow, "I remember my oath to my country, and the order of my brigadier. As for my order, I know it by heart. Not to permit the prisoner to escape; not to allow any one to see her; to resist all correspondence she may endeavor to institute; and to die at my post, — this is what I promised, and to this will I keep. *Vive la nation!*"

"That is what I tell you," said Duchesne. "It is not that I disapprove of your conduct, but I fear lest you should compromise yourself."

"Hush! here is some one."

The queen had not lost one word of this conversation,

although carried on in a low voice. Captivity had rendered her hearing doubly acute.

The noise which had attracted the attention of the two guards was the sound of several steps approaching the door. It opened, and two municipals entered, followed by the keeper and some of the turnkeys.

"Well," they inquired, "where is the prisoner?"

"Here she is," replied the two gendarmes.

"How is she lodged?"

"You can see." And Gilbert touched the screen.

"What do you wish?" demanded the queen.

"It is the visit of the Commune, Citizeness Capet."

"This man is kind," thought the queen; "and if my friends —"

"Very good, very good!" said the municipals, pushing Gilbert aside and entering the queen's chamber; "so much ceremony is not requisite here."

The queen did not even raise her head; and it might have been believed from her impassibility that she neither saw nor heard them, but fancied herself alone. The delegates of the Commune curiously observed everything around the chamber, sounded the wainscoting, the bed, shaking the grating of the window which looked upon the court of the female prisoners, and then having recommended to the gendarmes the utmost vigilance, took their departure without having addressed a word to the queen, who on her part seemed not to have been aware of their presence.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LA SALLE DES PAS-PERDUS.

Toward the decline of the day on which we have seen the municipals so carefully inspecting the queen's prison, a man attired in a gray jacket, his head covered with a mass of black hair, and on his head one of those hairy bonnets, which then among the people was a distinguishing mark of the most exaggerated patriotism, was walking about in the large hall so philosophically termed "La Salle des Pas-Perdus," and seemed most attentively observing all the goers and comers forming the general population of this hall, — a population considerably augmented at this period, when trials had acquired greater importance, and when the only pleading was to dispute their heads with the hangman and with Fouquier Tinville their indefatigable purveyor.

The attitude assumed by this man whose portrait we have just sketched was in very good taste. Society at this epoch was divided into two classes, — the lambs and the wolves. The one naturally inspired the other with fear, since one half of society devoured the other. Our fierce promenader was rather short, and wielded in his dirty black hand one of those knotted cudgels then called "constitutions." It is true the hand that flourished this horrible weapon might have appeared rather small to any one who might take into his head to act the inquisitorial part toward this singular personage which he had arrogated to himself with respect to others; but

no one felt the least inclined to risk it, for this man's aspect was far too terrible.

Indeed, this man with the cudgel caused much disquietude to several groups of petty scribes engaged in the discussion of public affairs, which at this time daily progressed from bad to worse, or from better to better, according as they were considered from a conservative or revolutionary point of view. These valorous folks looked askance at his long black beard, his green eyes surmounted by overhanging, shaggy eyebrows, and trembled whenever the promenade of the mighty patriot (a promenade which extended the whole length of the great hall) brought them in near contact with one another.

This terror was augmented from the fact that whenever they ventured to approach him too nearly, or even looked at him too attentively, the man with the cudgel struck his powerful weapon with its full weight upon the pavement, smashing the flag-stones upon which it fell, sometimes with a dull and heavy, sometimes with a sonorous and clashing sound.

But it was not only these brave men among the scribes, designated generally as the "rats of the Palace," who experienced this formidable impression; it was also the various individuals who entered the Salle des Pas-Perdus by the great door, or through some of its narrow vomitories, who also quickened their pace on perceiving the man with the cudgel, who obstinately continued his journey from one end of the hall to the other, finding each moment some pretext for making his weapon ring on the pavement.

If these writers had been less timorous, and the promenaders more clear-sighted, they would have discovered that our patriot, capricious like all eccentric or pronounced characters, appeared to evince a preference for certain

flag-stones, those for instance situated a little distance from the wall on the right, near the centre of the hall, which emitted a clear and ringing sound. He even finished by concentrating his anger upon some particular stones in the centre of the hall. At the same time he so far forgot himself as to stop, and with his eye seemed to be estimating the distance.

True, it was a momentary absence of mind only, and he immediately resumed his former expression, which a gleam of pleasure had replaced for an instant.

Almost at the same moment another patriot, — for at this epoch every one wore his opinions on his forehead, or rather in his dress, — almost at the same moment, say we, another patriot entered by the door of the gallery, and without appearing the least in the world to partake of the fear generated by the former occupant, began to cross the hall at a pace equal to his own, so that in the centre of the promenade they encountered each other.

The new arrival had, like the former, a hairy bonnet, a gray jerkin, dirty hands, and in one of them a cudgel; indeed, in addition he carried a sword, which struck against his legs at every step; and on the whole he appeared a greater subject for terror than his predecessor. The first had an air of ferocity, the last seemed replete with sinister cunning.

Although these two men appeared to belong to the same cause, and entertained the same opinions, the assembly ventured to watch the result, not of their meeting, for they were not walking in the same line, but their approach toward each other. At the first turn they were disappointed in their expectation, as the patriots contented themselves with exchanging looks; at the same time the smaller of the two turned slightly pale, — only

from an involuntary movement of the lips it was evident it was not caused by fear, but by disgust.

However, at the second turn, as if the patriot had made a violent effort, his countenance, till now so overcast, cleared up suddenly, and something like a smile passed over his lips as he inclined slightly to the left, with the evident intention of stopping the second patriot in his course.

Near the centre they joined each other.

"Why, upon my word, here is the Citizen Simon!" said the first patriot.

"Himself. But what do you want with the Citizen Simon? And, in the first place, who are you?"

"It seems, then, that you do not recognize me?"

"I do not recognize you, and for an excellent reason, — I never saw you before."

"Not recognize me! — when I had the honor to carry the head of the Princess Lamballe!"

At these words, pronounced with savage fury, and bursting passionately from the mouth of the patriot, Simon started.

"You?" said he, "you?"

"Ha! that surprises you! I thought that you would remember your friends better than that, faith! Ah, Citizen! you grieve me."

"You have done very well," said Simon; "but I did not recognize you."

"It is a greater privilege to act as guardian to the young Capet; it brings you more into notice. As for myself, I both know and esteem you."

"Ah! Thank you."

"You have no reason — are you taking a walk?"

"Yes; I am waiting for some one. And you?"

"I am doing the same."

"What is your name? I will make mention of you at the club."

"I am called Théodore."

"What else?"

"Nothing else: is not that enough?"

"Oh, certainly. Who are you waiting for, Citizen Theodore?"

"A friend to whom I wish to make a fine little denunciation."

"Indeed! Do tell me."

"A whole covey of aristocrats."

"What are their names?"

"No, indeed; I only tell that to my friend."

"You are wrong; for here is mine advancing toward us, who, it seems to me, is sufficiently acquainted with business to settle at once all this affair."

"Fouquier Tinville!" cried the first patriot.

"No one less, friend."

"That 's all right."

"Yes. Good-day, Citizen Fouquier."

Fouquier Tinville, calm and pale, opening wide, according to habit, his large black eyes shaded by his bushy eyebrows, at this moment entered by a side-door, his register in his hand, and a bundle of papers under his arm. "Good-day, Simon," said he; "anything new?"

"Several things. First, a denunciation from Citizen Théodore, who carried the head of the Princess Lamballe. I will introduce him to you."

Fouquier fixed his scrutinizing glance upon the patriot, who, notwithstanding his strong nerves, felt rather uneasy while undergoing this examination.

"Theodore!" said he; "and who is Theodore?"

"I!" said the man in the jerkin.

"You carried the head of the Princess Lamballe?"

said the public accuser, with an unmistakable expression of doubt.

"I. Rue Saint Antoine."

"But I know a person who boasts that he did so," said Fouquier.

"I know ten," replied the Citizen Theodore, courageously; "but, indeed, as they all make some claim for having done so, and I ask nothing, at least I ought to have the preference, I hope."

This reply excited Simon's laughter, and dispersed the cloud on the accuser's brow.

"Right," said he; "and if you did not do it, you ought to have done so. But leave us now; Simon has some business to transact with me."

Théodore retired, very little hurt by the frankness of the public accuser.

"One moment," cried Simon. "Do not send him away so; let us first hear his denunciation."

"Ah!" said Fouquier Tinville, with an absent air, "a denunciation?"

"Yes; a covey of conspirators," replied Simon.

"All in good time. Speak; what is the matter now?"

"Oh! not much; only the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge and some of his friends."

Fouquier made a leap backward, while Simon raised his arms toward heaven.

"Is this the truth?" they exclaimed, both together.

"The pure truth; will you take them?"

"At once. Where are they?"

"I met the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge in the Rue do la Grande Tissanderie."

"You are mistaken; he is not in Paris," replied Fouquier.

"I tell you I have seen him."

"Impossible! a hundred men have been sent in pursuit of him; he would not show himself in the streets of Paris."

"It was he, by Heaven!" said the patriot. "A tall dark man, as strong as three and bearded like the pard."

Fouquier shrugged his shoulders disdainfully.

"Another blunder," said he; "the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is short, pale, and has not the slightest sign of a beard."

The patriot dropped his weapon with an air of consternation.

"Never mind, your good intention is taken for the act. Come, Simon, we must both make haste; they require the register, this is the time for the carts."

"Well, there is nothing new; the child is well." The patriot turned his back that he might not appear indiscreet, but remained in a position which enabled him to hear.

"I will go," said he, "lest I should intrude."

"Adieu!" said Simon.

"Good-day," said Fouquier.

"Tell your friend that you were deceived," added Simon.

"Well, I shall wait," and Théodore removed to a short distance, and stood resting on his cudgel.

"So the child goes on well; but how fares he morally?" asked Fouquier.

"I mould him to my will."

"He will speak then?"

"When I choose."

"Do you think he will testify in the trial of Antoinette?"

"I do not think it; I am sure of it."

Theodore was leaning against a pillar, his eyes directed toward the door. But his eye was wandering, while his

ears were erect and uncovered under the hairy bonnet he wore. Perhaps he saw nothing, but most assuredly he heard something.

"Reflect well," said Fouquier, "and do not make what is termed a blunder of this commission. You feel sure that Capet will speak?"

"He will say all that I require."

"Has he told you what we are going to ask him?"

"He has told me."

"It is important, Simon, that you should promise this; the child's evidence is fatal to the mother."

"Zounds! I count upon that."

"There will have been nothing equal to it seen since the intimacy between Nero and Narcissus. Once more, reflect, Simon."

"One would fancy you took me for a brute, repeating constantly the same thing. Take this as an example: when I put leather in water it becomes supple, does it not?"

"But — I do not know," replied Fouquier.

"It becomes soft. Well, in my hands the little Capet becomes supple as the softest leather. I have my own method for that."

"It may be so," said Fouquier. "Is that all you have to say?"

"All — I forgot. There is a denunciation."

"Again? You will overwhelm me with business," said Fouquier.

"One must serve his country."

Simon presented a small paper, black as the leather he had just mentioned, but certainly less supple. Fouquier took it and read the contents.

"Again the Citizen Lorin; you have a great hatred to this man."

"I find him always acting in hostility to the law. He said, 'Adieu, Madame,' to a woman who saluted him from a window yesterday evening. To-morrow, I hope to give you a little information concerning another 'suspect;' that Maurice who was Municipal at the Temple when that affair of the red carnation occurred."

"Be sure! be sure!" exclaimed Fouquier, smiling at Simon.

He held out his hand, and then turned away with an abruptness that evinced little favor toward the shoemaker.

"What the devil do you wish me to be sure of? Many have been guillotined for much less."

"Patience," replied Fouquier, quietly; "everything cannot be done at the same time," and he passed quickly through the wicket.

Simon looked round for the Citizen Théodore to console himself with him. He was no longer to be seen.

He had hardly crossed the western iron gate, when Théodore reappeared at the corner of a writer's hut. The occupant of the hut accompanied him.

"At what hour are the iron gates closed?" asked Théodore of this man.

"At five o'clock."

"Then what do they do here?"

"Nothing; the hall remains empty till next day."

"No rounds, no visits?"

"No, sir; our barracks are locked."

The word "sir" made Théodore knit his brows, and look round with distrust.

"Are the crowbar and pistols safe in the barracks?" said he.

"Yes, under the carpet."

"Return home, then — By the bye, show me again

the chamber of the Tribunal that has not a grated window, and looks upon the court near the Place Dauphine."

"To the left, between the pillars under the lantern."

"Go, now, and have the horses ready at the place assigned!"

"A glorious chance! — a glorious chance! — depend fully upon me."

"Now is your time — No one is looking — open your barrack."

"It is done, sir; I will pray for you."

"It is not for me you ought to pray. Adieu."

And the Citizen Theodore, after an eloquent look, glided so adroitly under the low roof of the barrack, that he disappeared like the shadow of the writer who closed the door.

The worthy scribe drew the key from the lock, took some papers under his arm, and went out of the vast hall with the few employees that the stroke of five sent rushing from their desks like a rear guard of belated bees.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CITIZEN THÉODORE.

NIGHT had enveloped in her gray mantle the immense hall, whose sad echoes had to repeat the severe words of the advocates and the suppliant ones of the pleaders.

From afar, in the midst of the obscurity, upright and immovable, a white column seemed watching, in the centre of the hall, like a phantom protector over the sacred place.

The only noise heard in this darkness was the nibbling and galloping of innumerable rats, which gnawed the papers enclosed in the writer's huts, after drilling their way through the wood.

Sometimes the sound of a carriage penetrated as far as this sanctuary of Themis (as an Academician would say), and the vague clanking of keys, which appeared to proceed from under the ground; but all this only reverberated in the distance, and nothing save these distant sounds ever broke the deep silence, or penetrated the thick darkness save the glimmering of some far remote light.

Certainly the man would be seized by bewildering terror who at this hour would have ventured into the vast hall of the Palace, the exterior of whose walls was yet stained with the blood of the victims of September; whose staircases this very day had witnessed the descent of twenty-five human beings condemned to an ignominious death, and were separated only by a few

feet from the dungeons of the Conciergerie, peopled with bleached skeletons.

Nevertheless, in the middle of this frightful night, in the midst of this almost solemn silence, a low grating noise was heard; the door of a writer's hut turned upon its creaking hinges, and a shadow, darker than the shadow of night, glided cautiously out of the barrack.

Then the fierce patriot we have heard addressed as "sir," but who called himself Théodore, stepped lightly over the uneven stones. He held in his right hand a ponderous iron lever, and with his left felt that his double-barrelled pistol was secure in his belt.

"I reckoned twelve flag-stones from the stall; and see, here is the end of the first!" murmured he; and while calculating, he groped with the point of his foot to discover the chinks which time had rendered more perceptible.

"Let me see," said he, stopping; "have I taken my measurement correctly? Shall I possess strength sufficient; and she — will she have the courage? Oh, yes, her courage is known to me. Oh, my God! When I shall take her hand — when I can say, Madame, you are saved!"

He suddenly paused, as if oppressed by the weight of so great a hope.

"Ah!" he resumed, "rash and foolish project! others will say, hiding themselves under their bedclothes, or contenting themselves by sauntering about disguised as lackeys through the Conciergerie; but they have not my motive for daring all, — it is, that I not only desire to serve the queen, but the woman.

"Well, to work; let us again sum up the whole.

"To raise the stone is nothing, to leave it open is the danger, — they may perhaps make the rounds; but yet

they never do so. They cannot suspect anything, for I have no accomplices; and then what time is needed by an ardor like mine to dart through the dark passage? In three minutes I am under her chamber; in other five I raise the stone which is on the hearth. She will hear me working, but has too much firmness to feel alarmed; on the contrary, she will understand that a deliverer is near — She is guarded by two men who will doubtless hasten to the spot —

"Well, after all," said the patriot, with a melancholy smile, looking first at the weapon concealed in his girdle, and then at the one he held poised in his hand, "a double shot from this pistol, or a couple of strokes from this iron bar. Poor creatures! they will die like others not more culpable than themselves."

And Citizen Théodore resolutely pressed his lever between the chinks of the flag-stones.

At this moment a vivid light gleamed like a ray of gold across the stones, and a noise, repeated by the echoes of the vault, caused the conspirator to turn, and then with a single bound to conceal himself in the stall.

Soon voices, weakened by the distance, and softened by the emotion experienced by every one at night in a large and desolate building, reached the ears of Théodore.

He stooped down, and through an aperture in the stall perceived first a man in military costume, whose long sabre clanking on the pavement partly produced the sound which had attracted his attention; then, a man in a pistachio-colored suit, holding a rule in his hand and a roll of papers under his arm; thirdly, a man in a large waistcoat of ratteen and a fur bonnet; and lastly, a fourth, with wooden shoes and a jerkin.

The iron gate Des Merciers creaked upon its sonorous hinges, rattling the chain intended to keep it open during the day.

The four men entered.

"A round," murmured Théodore. "God be praised! ten minutes later and I should have been ruined."

He then with the utmost attention endeavored to recognize the individuals who composed the round, — indeed, three of them were known to him.

He who walked first, clad in the uniform of a general, was Santerre; the man in the ratteen waistcoat and fur bonnet was Richard the porter, and the man in clogs and jerkin was in all probability a turnkey.

But he had never seen the man in the pistachio-colored coat, who held a rule in his hand and a bundle of papers under his arm. Who or what could this man be; and what brought, at ten o'clock at night, to the Salle des Pas-Perdus, the general of the Commune, the keeper of the Conciergerie, a turnkey, and this other man? The Citizen Theodore knelt on one knee, holding in one hand his loaded pistol, while with the other he replaced his bonnet and hair, which his precipitous movement had deranged too much to look natural.

Up to this moment the nocturnal visitors had kept silence, or if they had spoken, their words had not reached the ears of the conspirator; but when about ten paces from his lurking place Santerre spoke, and his voice was distinctly heard by the Citizen Théodore.

"We are now," said he, "in the Salle des Pas-Perdus. It is for you now to guide us, Citizen Architect, and to endeavor to convince us that your revelation is no idle story; for you see the Revolution has done justice to all this folly, and we believe no more in these subterranean passages than in ghosts. What do you say, Citizen

Richard?" added Santerre, turning toward the man in the fur bonnet and ratteen vest.

"I have never said there was no subterranean passage under the Conciergerie," he replied. "Here is Gracchus, who has been turnkey for ten years, and consequently is as familiar with the whole of the Conciergerie as he is with the alphabet, and yet he ignores the existence of the vault of which the Citizen Giraud has spoken. However, as the Citizen Giraud is the city architect, he ought to know better than any of us. It is his business."

Théodore shivered from head to foot on hearing these words.

"Fortunately," murmured he, "the hall is large, and before they find what they search for, two days at least must expire."

But the architect opened his great roll of papers, put on his spectacles, and knelt down to examine the plan by the flickering light of the lantern which Gracchus held in his hand.

"I fear," said Santerre, ironically, "that the Citizen Giraud has been dreaming."

"You will see, Citizen General, if I am a dreamer. Wait a little; wait!"

"You see we are waiting," said Santerre.

"Good!" said the architect; and he began to calculate. "Twelve and four make sixteen," said he, "and eight are twenty-four, which, divided by six, makes four, and then half remains; that is it. I can tell the very spot; and if I am mistaken by so much as a foot, you may henceforth dub me an ass."

The architect pronounced these words with an assurance which curdled the blood of the Citizen Théodore.

Santerre regarded the plan with a species of respect, but evidently admired more than he comprehended it.

"Now follow what I say."

"Where?" asked Santerre.

"Zounds! upon this chart which I have drawn. Here we are! thirteen feet from the wall is a movable stone I have marked A; do you see it?"

"Certainly, I see A," said Santerre. "Do you think I do not know how to read?"

"Under this stone," continued the architect, "is a staircase; do you see? It is marked B."

"B!" said Santerre; "I see B, but I do not see the staircase," and the general laughed heartily at his own facetiousness.

"When once the stone is raised, and the foot upon the last step, count fifty paces, look up, and you will find yourself exactly at the register-office where the subterraneous passage terminates, passing under the cell of the queen."

"Capet's widow, you mean, Citizen Giraud," said Santerre, knitting his brows.

"Yes, Capet's widow."

"But you said 'the queen.'"

"The force of old habit."

"You say, then, it may be found under the register-office?" demanded Richard.

"Not only under the register-office, but I will tell you also in what part of the office you will discover it,—under the stove."

"That is curious," said Gracchus, "for I have noticed that every time I dropped a log in that place the stone sounded hollow."

"In short, if we find your statement correct, Citizen Architect, I shall pronounce geometry a fine thing."

"Then declare it, Citizen Santerre, for I am now going to conduct you to the place indicated by the letter A."

The Citizen Theodore sank his nails into his flesh.

"When I have seen it," said Sauterre, — "when I have seen it! I rather resemble Saint Thomas."

"Ah! you said Saint Thomas."

"Yes, as you said 'the queen,' from mere habit; but they cannot accuse me of conspiring for him."

"Nor me for the queen."

After this retort the architect delicately placed his rule, reckoned the distance, then stopped, having apparently finished his calculation, and struck upon a particular stone.

This was the identical stone struck by the Citizen Theodore in his fit of frantic rage.

"It is here, Citizen General," said the architect.

"You fancy so, Citizen Giraud."

Our concealed patriot so far forgot himself as to strike his thigh with his clinched fist, at the same time groaning deeply.

"I am positive," said Giraud; "and your examination, combined with my report, will prove to the Convention that I have not been deceived. Yes, Citizen General," continued the architect, with emphasis, "this stone opens upon a subterranean passage, terminating at the register-office, and passing below the cell of the Widow Capet. Let us raise the stone; descend with me into the vault, and I will convince you that two men, even one man, could effect a rescue in a single night, without any one suspecting it."

A murmur of terror and admiration, elicited by the architect's words, ran through the group, and faintly reached the Citizen Théodore, who seemed turned to stone.

"Look at the danger we run," continued Giraud. "Well, now with a grating which I shall place in the

middle of this underground passage before it reaches the cell of the Widow Capet, I shall save the country."

"Ah, Citizen Giraud!" said Santerre, "that is an idea bordering on the sublime."

"Perdition seize you, addle-pated fool!" grumbled the patriot, with redoubled fury.

"Now raise the stone," said the architect to the Citizen Gracchus, who in addition to a lantern carried a crowbar.

Gracchus set to work, and in a second the stone was raised.

The vault appeared open, with the staircase lost in its profundity, while the moist air escaped like a pestilent vapor.

"Another abortive attempt," murmured the Citizen Theodore. "Alas! Heaven does not will that she should escape, and her cause must be accursed!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE CITIZEN GRACCHUS.

For an instant the three men remained motionless at the entrance to the vault, while the turnkey plunged his lantern into the opening without being able to penetrate its depth. The architect triumphantly exulted over his companions from the summit of his genius.

"Well!" said he, at length.

"Faith! yes," replied Santerre, "here incontestably is the passage. It only remains to know where it leads to."

"Yes,' repeated Richard, "it remains to know that."

"Well, then, descend yourself, Citizen Richard, and then you will see if I have told you the truth."

"I have something better to do than go in there," said the porter. "We will return with you and the general to the Conciergerie. There you can raise the hearthstone, and we shall see."

"Very well," said Santerre, "we will return."

"But we must be careful," said the architect; "this stone remaining unclosed may suggest an idea to some one."

"Who the devil do you imagine ever comes here at this hour?" said Santerre.

"Besides," said Richard, "the hall is deserted, and to leave Gracchus here is sufficient. Remain here, Citizen Gracchus, and we will return to you from the other side of the subterranean passage."

"All right," said Gracchus.

"Are you armed?" demanded Santerre.

"I have my sword and this crowbar, Citizen General."

"Just the thing! keep strict watch; in ten minutes we will be with you."

And having closed the iron gate, the three took their departure by the Gallery des Merciers, to repair to the private entrance of the Conciergerie.

The turnkey watched their receding footsteps, and followed them with his eyes as far as he could see, and listened as long as he had anything to hear; then all relapsed into silence, and supposing himself in perfect solitude, he placed his lantern on the ground, sat down, his legs overhanging the depths of the vault, and began to meditate. Turnkeys meditate sometimes; but people, generally speaking, do not trouble themselves to find out what is the subject of their meditations.

All at once, in the midst of his profound revery, he felt a hand press heavily upon his shoulder. He turned round, and attempted, on seeing a stranger, to give the alarm, but at the same instant the cold point of a pistol was pressed to his forehead.

The accents were arrested in his throat, his arms fell listlessly by his side, and his eyes assumed the most suppliant expression.

"Not a word," said the intruder, "or you are a dead man."

"What do you want, sir?" stammered the turnkey.

Even in '93, there were moments when, renouncing their idea of universal equality, they forgot to address each other as "Citizen."

"I wish," said the Citizen Théodore, "to be allowed to go down there."

"What for?"

"Never mind."

The turnkey regarded the person who had proffered this request with the most profound astonishment; but in the mean time his interlocutor fancied he detected in the man's look a ray of intelligence.

He lowered the pistol.

"Would you refuse to make your fortune?"

"I don't know. Hitherto no one has ever made me proposals on the subject."

"Well, then, I will begin."

"You offer to make my fortune?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean by a fortune?"

"Fifty thousand golden francs, for instance. Money is scarce, and fifty thousand francs now are worth a million. Well, I offer you that sum."

"To allow you to go down there?"

"Yes; but on condition that you come with me, and afford me your assistance in my undertaking."

"But what are you going to do? In five minutes that vault will be filled with soldiers, who will arrest you."

The Citizen Théodore was forcibly struck by this argument.

"Cannot you prevent the soldiers from descending there?"

"I have no means of so doing, I know none, and cannot think of any."

Indeed, it was evident the turnkey was taxing all his mental energies to discover some means of winning the fifty thousand francs.

"But," demanded the Citizen Théodore, "could we not enter to-morrow?"

"Yes; but to-morrow a grate of iron will be placed across the passage, occupying its whole width; and for the

greater security it is arranged that this partition should be entirely solid, and without even a door."

"Then we must think of something else," said Théodore.

"Yes; we must find some other way," said the turnkey.

It will be seen from the joint manner in which Gracchus expressed himself, that an alliance had already been struck between himself and the Citizen Théodore.

"That will be my concern," said Théodore. "What do you do at the Conciergerie?"

"I am a turnkey."

"What are your duties?"

"I open the doors and shut them."

"Do you sleep there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you take your meals there?"

"Not always. I have my hours of recreation."

"And then?"

"I avail myself of them."

"What to do?"

"To pay my respects to the mistress of a tavern called Noah's Well, who has promised to marry me when I am possessed of twelve hundred francs."

"Where is the tavern Noah's Well?"

"Near the Rue de la Vieille-Draperie."

"Very well."

"Hush, sir."

The patriot listened.

"Ah! ah!" said he.

"Do you hear?"

"Yes. Voices and footsteps."

"They are returning."

"You see very well that we should not have had time."

This *we* was becoming more and more pronounced.

"That is true. You are a brave fellow, Citizen, and are through me predestined —"

"To what?"

"To be rich one day."

"God grant it!"

"You then still believe in God?"

"Sometimes; here and there. To-day, for example —"

"Well?"

"I should willingly believe."

"Believe, then," said the Citizen Théodore, putting ten louis into the man's hand.

"The devil!" said he, regarding the gold by the light of the lantern. "Is it, then, serious?"

"It could not be more so."

"What must I do?"

"Meet me to-morrow at Noah's Well; I will then tell you what I require of you. What is your name?"

"Gracchus."

"Well, Citizen Gracchus, get yourself dismissed from here to-morrow by the keeper Richard."

"Dismissed! give up my place!"

"Do you reckon on remaining a turnkey, with fifty thousand francs?"

"No, but being a turnkey and poor, I am certain of not being guillotined."

"Certain?"

"Or nearly so; while being free and rich —"

"You will hide your money, and make love to a spinster instead of to the mistress of Noah's Well."

"Well, then, it is settled."

"To-morrow at the tavern."

"At what hour?"

"At six in the evening."

"Flee quickly; there they are. I tell you to be quick,

because, I presume, you descend and go through the vaults."

"To-morrow," repeated Théodore, hastening away.

And not before it was time, for the voices and steps drew near, and lights were already seen approaching in the obscurity of the underground passage. Theodore gained the gate which the writer from whom he had taken the hut had shown him, opened the lock with his crowbar, reached the window, threw it open, dropped softly into the street, and found himself upon the pavement of the Republic once again.

Before quitting the Salle des Pas-Perdus he heard the Citizen Gracchus again question Richard, and also his reply.

"The Citizen Architect was quite right; the vault passes below the chamber of the Widow Capet, and it was dangerous."

"I well believe it," said Gracchus, who in this instance told the perfect truth.

Santerre reappeared at the opening of the staircase.

"And the workmen, Citizen Architect?" demanded he of Giraud.

"Before daybreak they will be here; and during the session the grating will be placed," replied a voice which seemed to proceed from the bowels of the earth.

"And you will have saved the country," cried Santerre, half in jest, half in earnest.

"You little know the truth of what you say, Citizen General," murmured Gracchus.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ROYAL CHILD.

In the mean time, as we have seen in the chapter preceding, the queen's trial was about to take place.

It was already surmised that by the sacrifice of this illustrious head the popular hatred, so long displayed in murmurs, would at length be satisfied.

The means were not wanting for the completion of this tragedy; and in the mean time Fouquier Tinville, that fatal accuser, had resolved not to neglect the new mode of accusation which Simon had promised to place in his hands.

The day after he and Simon had met in the Salle des Pas-Perdus, the noise of arms again startled the prisoners who remained in the Temple.

These prisoners were Madame Elizabeth, Madame Royale, and the child who after having been called "Your Majesty" in his cradle, was now styled simply the "Little Capet."

General Hanriot, with his tricolored plume, his splendid horse, and long sword, followed by several of the National Guard, dismounted, and entered the dungeon where the royal child languished.

By the general's side walked a registrar of very unpropossessing appearance, carrying a writing-desk, a large roll of paper, and flourishing a pen of immoderate length.

Behind the scribe walked the public accuser. We have seen, we know, and shall meet again at a later period, this dry, jaundiced, cold man, with his bloodshot eyes, who made the ferocious Santerre himself tremble, even when cased in his armor.

Several National Guards and a lieutenant followed them.

Simon, smiling hypocritically, and holding his bear-skin bonnet in one hand and his shoemaker's stirrup in the other, walked before to show the committee the way.

They came to a very dirty chamber, spacious and ill-furnished, at the end of which, seated upon his bed, was the young Louis, in a state of perfect immobility.

When we saw the poor child fleeing from the brutal anger of Simon, he still retained a species of vitality, resenting the unworthy treatment of the shoemaker of the Temple. He fled, he wept, he prayed; then he feared and suffered, but still he hoped.

But now both fear and hope had vanished; without doubt the suffering still existed, but if it still remained, the infant martyr, whom they had made pay after so cruel a fashion for his parents' faults, buried it in the depths of his heart, and veiled it under an appearance of total insensibility. He did not even raise his head when the commissioners walked up to him.

Without further ceremony they instantly installed themselves. The public accuser seated himself at the head of the bed, Simon at the foot, the registrar near the window, the National Guard and their lieutenant on the side and rather in the shade.

Those among them who regarded the little prisoner with the slightest interest, or even curiosity, remarked the child's pallor, his extraordinary stoutness (resulting

from his bloated condition), and his bent legs, the joints of which had already begun to swell.

"That child is very ill," said the lieutenant, with an assurance that caused Fouquier to turn round, though already seated and prepared to question his victim.

Little Capet raised his eyes to discover who had uttered these words, and recognized the same young man who had already once before saved him from Simon's cruelty in the court of the Temple. A sweet and intelligent glance shot from his deep blue eyes, and that was all.

"Ah, ah! is that you, Citizen Lorin?" said Simon, thus calling the attention of Fouquier Tinville to the friend of Maurice.

"Myself, Citizen Simon," said Lorin, with his usual nonchalance.

And as Lorin though always ready to face danger was not the man to seek it uselessly, he availed himself of this circumstance to bow to Fouquier Tinville, which salutation was politely returned.

"You observed, I think, Citizen," said the public accuser, "that the child was ill; are you a doctor?"

"I have studied medicine, at least, if I am not a medical man."

"Well, and what do you discover in him?"

"Symptoms of sickness, do you mean?" asked Lorin.

"Yes."

"I find his cheeks and eyes puffed up, his hands thin and white, his knees swollen; and were I to feel his pulse, I should certainly count eighty-five or ninety pulsations in a minute."

The child appeared insensible to the enumeration of his sufferings.

"And to what might science attribute the condition of the prisoner?"

Lorin rubbed the tip of his nose, murmuring, —

"Phyllis wants to make me speak,
I am not the least inclined.

"Faith, Citizen!" replied he, "I am not sufficiently acquainted with little Capet's constitution to reply. However — "

Simon lent an attentive ear, and laughed in his sleeve to find his enemy so near committing himself.

"However," said Lorin, "I think he does not have sufficient exercise."

"I believe the little scoundrel," said Simon, "does not choose to walk."

The child remained quite unmoved by this apostrophe of the shoemaker.

Fouquier Tinville arose, advanced to Lorin, and addressed some words to him in a low tone. No one heard the words, but it was evident they assumed the form of interrogatories.

"Oh, oh! do you believe that, Citizen? It is a serious charge for a mother — "

"Under any circumstances, we shall find out. Simon pretends he has heard him say so, and has engaged to make him acknowledge it."

"This would be frightful," said Lorin; "but indeed it is possible; the Austrian is not exempt from sin, and right or wrong, does not concern me — They have made her out a Messalina; but not content with that, they wish to make her an Agrippina. I must acknowledge it appears to me rather hard."

"This is what has been reported by Simon," said the impassible Fouquier.

"I do not doubt that Simon has said all this. There are some men who stick at nothing, even the most impos

sible accusations. But do you not find," said Lorin, fixing his eyes steadily on Fouquier, — "do you not find — you, an intelligent and upright man, possessed with a strong mind — that to inquire of a child concerning such circumstances as those which all the most natural and most sacred laws of Nature command us to respect, is to insult all human nature in the person of a child?"

The accuser did not frown, but took a note from his pocket and showed it to Lorin.

"The Convention enjoins me to investigate," said he; "the rest does not concern me. I shall investigate."

"It is just," said Lorin; "and I declare that if this child acknowledges —" And the young man shook his head, expressive of disgust.

"Besides," continued Fouquier, "it is not only upon the denunciation of Simon that we proceed; the accusation is public."

And Fouquier drew a second paper from his pocket.

This was a number of the paper entitled "Le Père Duchesne;" which, as is well known, was written by Hébert.

The accusation indeed appeared there in full.

"It is written, and even printed," said Lorin; "but till I hear a similar accusation proceed from the lips of the child, — mind, I mean voluntarily, freely, and without menaces, — notwithstanding Simon and Hébert, I shall disbelieve it, as much as you in reality do yourself."

Simon impatiently awaited the issue of this conversation.

The miserable creature was not unaware of the power exercised upon an intelligent man by the looks which he receives from the crowd, expressive either of sympathy or subtle hatred. Sometimes this subtle influence repels, sometimes it attracts, makes the thought flow out and even draws the person of the man toward that other

man of equal or superior mental calibre whom he recognizes in the crowd.

But Fouquier Tinville had felt the keen observation of Lorin, and was anxious to be fully understood by him.

"The examination is about to commence," said the public accuser. "Registrar, resume your pen!"

The registrar, who had just drawn out the preliminaries of the investigation, was waiting, like Hanriot, Simon, and all the rest, till the colloquy between Fouquier and Lorin had ceased.

The child alone appeared perfectly unconscious of the scene in which he was soon to become the principal actor, and his face, which had for an instant gleamed with a ray of the highest intelligence, had relapsed into its listless, apathetic expression.

"Silence!" cried Hanriot, "the Citizen Fouquier Tinville is going to interrogate the child."

"Capet," said the public accuser, "do you know what has become of your mother?"

The little Louis turned from an ashy paleness to a brilliant red, but made no reply.

"Did you hear me, Capet?"

He still remained silent.

"Oh, he hears well enough," said Simon, "only he is like the ape, he will not reply for fear he should be taken for a man, and so made to work."

"Reply, Capet!" said Hanriot; "it is the Commission of the Convention that interrogates you. You must show obedience to the laws."

The child turned pale, but did not reply.

Simon made a frantic gesture of rage. With natures so stupid and brutal as his, anger becomes an intoxication, attended with all the loathsome symptoms of alcoholic inebriety.

"Will you reply, wolf's cub?" showing him the strap.

"Be quiet, Simon," said Fouquier Tinville; "you have not the right to speak."

This expression, which had become habitual to Tinville at the Revolutionary Tribunal, now escaped him involuntarily.

"Do you hear, Simon?" said Lorin. "This is the second time you have been told this in my presence; the first was when you accused Tison's daughter, whom you had the pleasure of bringing to the scaffold."

Simon was silent.

"Does your mother love you, Capet?" asked Fouquier.

Still the same silence.

"They say not," continued the accuser.

Something like a ghastly smile passed over the child's pale lips.

"But then, I say," roared Simon, "he has told me she loves him too much!"

"Look here, Simon," said Lorin, "you are angry that the little Capet chatters so much when you are together, and remains silent before company to-day."

"Oh, if we were alone!" said Simon.

"Yes, if you were alone; but unfortunately you are not alone. Oh, if you were, brave Simon, excellent patriot! how you would belabor the poor child, eh? But you are not alone, and dare not show your rage before honest men like us who know that the ancients, whom we endeavor to take for our models, respected all who were weak. You dare not, for you are not alone; and you are not valiant, my worthy man, when you have children of five feet six inches to combat."

"Oh!" muttered Simon, grinding his teeth.

"Capet," said Fouquier, "have you confided any secrets to Simon?"

The child never turned round, but his face assumed an expression of irony impossible to describe.

"About your mother?" continued Fouquier.

A look of supreme contempt passed over his countenance.

"Reply, yes or no!" cried Hanriot.

"Say yes!" roared Simon, holding his leather stirrup over the child's head.

The child shuddered, but made no movement to avoid the blow. Those present uttered a cry expressive of their disgust. Lorin did more. Before the wretch could lower his arm he darted forward and seized him by the wrist.

"Will you let me go?" roared Simon, purple with rage.

"Come, there is no harm," said Fouquier, "in a mother loving her child. Tell us in what way your mother loved you, Capet. It may be useful to her."

The young prisoner started at the idea of being useful to his mother.

"She loves me as a mother loves her son, sir," said he; "there are not two ways for mothers to love their sons, or sons to love their mothers."

"And I, little serpent, declare that you have told me your mother — "

"You have dreamed that," interrupted Lorin, quietly, "you must often have the nightmare, Simon."

"Lorin! Lorin!" growled Simon, grinding his teeth.

"Yes, again, Lorin. There is no way of beating Lorin, since he chastises the wicked; there is no way to denounce him for what he did in arresting your arm, as it was done before General Hanriot and Fouquier Tinville, who approve of it, and they are not lukewarm in the cause. There is then no way to bring him to the guil-

lotine, as you did poor Héloïse Tison. It is very grievous, very vexatious, very enraging; still it is so, my poor Simon!"

"Later! later!" replied the shoemaker, with his mocking laugh.

"Yes, dear friend," said Lorin, "I hope with the help of the Supreme Being — Ah! you expected I was going to say with the help of God! But I hope with the assistance of the Supreme Being, and my good sword, to disembowel you first; but move aside, Simon, you prevent me from seeing."

"Rascal!"

"Be silent, you prevent me from hearing," and Lorin silenced him with a threatening look.

Simon clinched his black hands and shook his fists, but as Lorin had told him, he was obliged to confine himself to these manifestations.

"Now he has begun to speak," said Hanriot, "he will continue no doubt. Go on, Fouquier!"

"Will you reply now?" demanded Fouquier.

The child returned to his former silence.

"You see, Citizen! you see!" exclaimed Simon.

"The obstinacy of this child is strange," said Hanriot, troubled in spite of himself at this royal firmness.

"He is ill advised," said Lorin.

"By whom?" demanded Hanriot.

"By his guardian."

"Do you accuse me?" cried Simon, — "do you denounce me? Ah! that is curious —"

"Let us try gentleness," said Fouquier. Then turning toward the child, whom one would have supposed to be insensible, —

"My child," said he, "reply to the National Commission; do not aggravate your situation by refusing us any

useful information. You have spoken to the Citizen Simon about your mother, — how you caress her and love her; how she caresses and loves you?"

Louis threw a glance around the assembly, which gleamed with hatred when it rested on Simon, but he did not reply.

"Do you feel yourself unhappy?" demanded the accuser; "are you uncomfortably lodged, badly fed, and unkindly treated? Would you wish more liberty, better food, another prison, another guardian? Would you like a horse to ride upon, and some companions of your own age?"

Louis still maintained the profound silence he had only once broken, to defend his mother.

The Commission was utterly confounded at so much firmness and intelligence evinced by a child.

"Ah, these kings!" said Hanriot, in a low voice, "what a race! They are like tigers; even the young ones inherit their wickedness."

"How are we to write the investigation?" asked the registrar, much embarrassed.

"There is no charge against Simon; there is nothing to write," said Lorin; "that will suit him exactly."

Simon again shook his fist at his implacable enemy.

Lorin began to laugh.

"You will not laugh like that the day you will sneeze in the sack," said Simon, drunk with fury.

"I do not know whether I shall precede or follow you in the little ceremony you menace me with," said Lorin; "but this I do know, that many will laugh when your turn comes. Gods! — I have spoken in the plural, — gods! you will not be ugly then, Simon; you will be hideous."

And Lorin retired behind the Commission, with a fresh burst of laughter.

The Commission, having nothing more to attend to, withdrew.

As for the poor child, released from his tormentors, he began to sing a little melancholy ditty which had been a great favorite of his father.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE BOUQUET OF VIOLETS.

As might be foreseen, the felicity of Geneviève and Maurice was not of long continuance.

In the tempest which unchains the wind and hurls the thunderbolt, the nest of the doves is shaken in the tree where they had retired for shelter.

Geneviève passed from one terror to another. She no longer feared for Maison-Rouge, she now trembled for Maurice.

She knew her husband sufficiently well to feel convinced, the moment of his disappearance, that he was saved; but sure of his safety, she thought now of her own.

She dared not confide her grief to the least timid man of this epoch when all from desperation were devoid of fear, but it was plainly evinced by her red eyes and pallid cheeks.

One day Maurice softly entered, so quietly indeed that Geneviève, buried in a profound revery, did not notice his entrance. He stopped upon the threshold and saw Geneviève sitting immovable, her eyes fixed on vacancy, her hands lying listlessly on her lap, her head hanging pensively upon her bosom.

He gazed at her for a moment with an expression of deepest sadness, for all that was passing in the young girl's heart was suddenly revealed, as if he had read even to her latest thought. He stepped up to her.

"You have ceased to care for France, Geneviève; confess it is so. You fly from the air breathed here, and not without the greatest reluctance will you even approach the window."

"Alas!" said Geneviève, "I know I cannot conceal my thoughts from you, Maurice; you have divined rightly."

"It is nevertheless a fine country," said the young man; "life is here important, and well occupied now. This bustling activity of the Tribune, the clubs, the conspiracies, renders sweeter the hours spent by our own fireside. One loves it the more ardently, it may be, from the fear of not being able to love it on the morrow, for on the morrow one may have ceased to exist."

Geneviève shook her head. "An ungrateful country to serve," said she.

"Why so?"

"Yes; you who have labored so much for the cause of liberty, are you not to-day more than half suspected?"

"But you, dear Geneviève," said Maurice, with a look replete with tenderness, "you a sworn enemy to this liberty, — you who have done so much against it! You yet sleep, peaceable and inviolate, beneath the roof of a Republican; and there, you see, is my recompense."

"Yes," said Geneviève, "but that cannot last long; that which is wrong cannot endure."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to say that I, — that is to say an aristocrat, — that I who dream quietly of the defeat of your party and the ruin of your plans; I who plot, even in your house, the return of the ancient régime; I who, recognized, would condemn you to death and dishonor, according to your opinions at least, — I, Maurice, will not remain here as the evil genius of your house; I will not drag you to the scaffold."

"And where will you go, Geneviève?"

"Where shall I go, Maurice? One day when you are out I shall go and denounce myself, without saying where I come from."

"Oh!" cried Maurice, wounded to the heart's core, "already ungrateful?"

"No," cried the young woman, throwing her arms round Maurice's neck; "it is love, and the most devoted love, I swear. I should not wish my brother to be taken and slaughtered as a rebel; I do not wish my lover to be arrested and guillotined as a traitor."

"And you will do this, Geneviève?"

"As truly as there is a God in heaven," replied the young woman; "besides, I not only experience fear but remorse," and she bowed her head as if remorse were a burden too heavy to be borne.

"Oh, Geneviève!" said Maurice.

"You will understand all that I say, all that I feel, Maurice, for you yourself experience this remorse. You know I gave myself to you while I belonged to another, and you have taken me without my possessing the right to dispose of myself."

"Enough!" said Maurice, "enough!" He knit his brow, and a melancholy resolution shone in his clear bright eyes. "I will show you, Geneviève, how entirely I love you," said the young man, "I will prove to you that no sacrifice is beyond my love. You hate France. Well, so be it. We will quit France."

Geneviève clasped her hands, and regarded her lover with enthusiastic admiration.

"You will not deceive me, Maurice," murmured she.

"Have I ever deceived you?" asked Maurice, "and is this the time when, to obtain you, I have dishonored myself?"

Geneviève approached her lips to Maurice's, and remained hanging on the neck of her lover.

"Yes, you are right," said Geneviève; "it is I who am mistaken. What I feel is not remorse, perhaps it is a degradation of soul; but you will comprehend at least I love you far too much to feel any other emotion than the all-engrossing one, the fear of losing you. Let us go far away, Maurice, let us go far away where no one can ever reach us."

"Oh, thanks!" said Maurice, transported with joy.

"But how can we flee?" said Geneviève, trembling at the hazard. "It is not so easy to escape nowadays from the poniard of the assassins of the 2d of September, or the hatchet of the executioners of the 21st of January."

"Geneviève," said Maurice, "God will protect us. Listen to me! A good action which I endeavored to perform, on that very 2d of September which you have just named, is now about to receive its reward. I wished to save a poor priest who had studied with me. I went to Danton, and at his request the Committee of Public Safety signed a passport for the unfortunate man and his sister. This passport Danton forwarded to me; but the unfortunate priest, instead of coming to my house for it, as I had advised him to do, went and shut himself up with the Carmelites, from whom he was taken and killed."

"And the passport?" asked Geneviève.

"I have it now. It is worth a million. It is worth more than that, Geneviève, — it comprises both life and happiness!"

"Oh, God be praised!" cried the young woman.

"Now, my property, as you are aware, consists of an estate managed by an old servant of the family, a stanch patriot, and strictly loyal, in whom we may confide. He

will send remittances whenever I wish. On arriving at Boulogne, we will go to his house."

"Where does he reside then?"

"At Abbeville."

"When shall we go, Maurice?"

"Within an hour."

"No one need know of our departure."

"No one will know it. I will run to Lorin; he has a cabriolet and no horse, while I have a horse and no carriage. We will set out immediately on my return. Remain you here, Geneviève, and prepare everything for our departure. We want but little luggage; we can purchase all that we require in England. I shall give Scævola some commission that will remove him out of the way. Lorin will explain our departure to him this evening. By that time we shall be far away."

"But if we should be arrested upon the road?"

"Have we not our passport? We shall go to Hubert's house, — that is the steward's name. Hubert is a member of the town council of Abbeville; from Abbeville to Boulogne he will accompany us as safeguard. At Boulogne we will purchase and freight a vessel. I could, besides, proceed to the Committee, and make them give me a mission to Abbeville. But no; we shall use no fraud, Geneviève. It is better to risk our lives to save and secure our happiness."

"Yes, yes, dear Maurice; and we shall succeed. But how you are perfumed this morning!" said the young woman, concealing her face on Maurice's breast.

"True; I purchased a bunch of violets for you this morning, passing before the Palace d'Egalité; but on my return, finding you so sad, I thought of nothing but inquiring into the cause of your distress."

"Oh, give it to me; I will return it."

Geneviève inhaled the odor of the bouquet with that intense delight which persons of nervous organization always experience from the perfume of flowers. Suddenly her eyes suffused with tears.

"What is the matter?" asked Maurice.

"Poor Héloïse!" murmured Geneviève.

"Ah, yes!" said Maurice, with a sigh; "but let us think of ourselves, and leave the dead, wherever they may be, to rest in the grave dug by their devotion. Adieu! I am going."

"Return quickly."

"In less than half an hour I shall be here again."

"But if Lorin is not at home?"

"What does it matter? his servant knows me. And even in his absence I can take what I please, as he would do here in mine."

"Very well."

"Now, my Geneviève, prepare everything; but, as I have told you, confine yourself to necessaries. I do not wish our departure to appear like a removal."

The young man advanced a step toward the door.

"Maurice!" said Geneviève.

He turned round, and saw the young woman extend her arms toward him.

"Good-by for the present, dear love," said he; "in half an hour I shall be here."

Geneviève remained alone, occupied, as we have said, in preparations for their departure.

She accomplished her task in feverish haste. As long as she remained in Paris, the part she was acting appeared to her doubly culpable. Once out of France, once among strangers, it seemed that her crime — a crime rather of fatality than her own — would weigh the less heavily on her conscience.

She even hoped, isolated and in solitude, she might at last forget the existence of any other man than Maurice.

They would fly to England; everything was arranged. There they would hire a little cottage, standing alone, very retired, shut out from all eyes; they would change their names, and instead of two names would have one.

There they would have two servants who would be perfectly ignorant of their past. Fortunately, both Geneviève and Maurice spoke English.

Neither of them left anything to regret in France, save that mother whom one always regrets, even when she is only a step-mother, — one's country. Geneviève commenced, then, making preparations for their voyage, or rather flight.

She took singular pleasure in selecting from the rest those objects for which Maurice had evinced any predilection. The coat setting off his tall figure to advantage, the cravat and waistcoat best suited to his complexion, the books whose leaves he had most frequently turned.

She had already made her selection. Clothes, linen, and books, waiting to be packed, strewed the floor, the chairs, the sofa and the piano.

Suddenly she heard the key turn in the lock.

"Why, Scævola has returned," said she; "surely Maurice could not have met him."

And she continued her occupation.

The doors of the salon were open, and she heard Scævola moving in the antechamber. She held a roll of music in her hand, and was looking for some string to tie round it.

"Scævola!" cried she.

An approaching step sounded in the adjoining room.

"Scævola!" repeated Geneviève, "do come here, please!"

"I am here," said a voice.

At the sound of this voice Geneviève turned quickly round, and uttered a terrified cry.

"My husband!" cried she.

"Himself," said Dixmer, coolly.

Geneviève was upon a chair, searching for some string in the wardrobe. She felt her head turn round, and extending her arms, fell backward, wishing she could precipitate herself into an abyss beneath.

Dixmer took her in his arms, and carried her to a sofa.

"What is the matter, my dear? What is it? My presence seems to have produced a most disagreeable effect upon you."

"I am dying," murmured Geneviève, turning from him, and pressing both hands over her eyes that she might shut out the frightful apparition.

"What!" said Dixmer, "did you believe me dead, my dear, and do you take me for a ghost?"

Geneviève looked round her with a bewildered air, when, perceiving the portrait of Maurice, she glided from the sofa and fell upon her knees, as if to implore the assistance of this powerless and insensible image, which still continued to smile.

The unhappy woman fully comprehended the menaces concealed by Dixmer under his affected calmness.

"Oh, my dear child," continued the master-tanner, "it is indeed myself. Perhaps you thought I was far from Paris; but no, I remained here. The day after I had left the house, I returned, and found in its stead a heap of ruins. I inquired after you. No one had seen you. I then commenced a search for you, and have had

much trouble to find you. I avow that I did not think you were here; however, I had my suspicions. So, as you see, I came. So here I am; and there are you. And how is dear Maurice? Indeed, I fear you have suffered much. You so stanch a Royalist, compelled to seek shelter under the roof of so fanatical a Republican."

"My God! my God!" murmured Geneviève, "take pity upon me!"

"After all, my dear," continued Dixmer, "what serves to console me most is that you are so comfortably lodged here, and that you do not appear to have suffered much from the proscription. As for myself, since the burning of our house, and the ruin of our fortune, I have had my share of wandering adventures, sometimes living in caves, sometimes in boats, and sometimes even in the common sewers which empty into the Seine."

"Sir!" said Geneviève.

"You have there some beautiful fruit; as for me, I have often gone without any dessert, not having had any dinner."

Geneviève, sobbing bitterly, supported her head between her hands.

"Not," continued Dixmer, "that I was destitute of money. I have, thank God! generally carried with me thirty thousand francs in gold, which at this time is worth five hundred thousand francs; but how should a 'collier,' a 'fisherman,' or a 'rag merchant' draw louis from his pocket to purchase a morsel of cheese or a sausage. Eh! my God! yes, Madame, I have successively adopted these three costumes. To-day, the better to disguise myself, I am dressed as a patriot of the patriots; I lisp, and I swear. An outlaw cannot conceal himself so easily in Paris as a young and pretty woman, and I

have not the happiness of knowing an ardent young female Republican who could hide me from every eye."

"Sir! sir!" cried Geneviève, "have mercy upon me! you see that I am dying."

"Anxiety; I can understand you have had much anxiety about me; but console yourself, you see me now. I have returned, and we shall part no more, Madame."

"Oh, you will kill me!" cried Geneviève.

Dixmer regarded her with a frightful smile.

"Kill an innocent woman! Oh, Madame, what makes you say so? It must be that grief for my absence has turned your brain."

"Sir!" cried Geneviève, "sir, I beseech you to kill me at once, rather than torture me with these cruel railleries. No, I am not innocent; yes, I am criminal; yes, I merit death. Kill me, sir, kill me!—"

"Then you acknowledge that you merit death?"

"Yes! yes!"

"And to expiate this I know not what crime of which you accuse yourself, you will submit to death without complaint?"

"Strike, sir, I will not utter a cry; and instead of cursing I will bless the hand that strikes me."

"No, Madame, I do not wish to strike you; nevertheless in all probability you will die. Only your death, instead of being as you seem to fear an ignominious one, shall be most glorious. Thank me, Madame; while punishing, I will immortalize you."

"What then will you do, sir?"

"You will follow the end to which we were tending when interrupted on our route. In your own eyes and in mine, you will die guilty; in the eyes of the world you will die a martyr."

"Oh, my God! you will drive me mad by speaking thus. Where are you conducting me? Where are you dragging me?"

"In all probability to death."

"Let me then offer up one prayer."

"To whom?"

"It matters not to you. The moment you deprive me of life, my debt is cancelled. My debt paid, I owe you nothing."

"True," said Dixmer, retiring into another room; "I will await you." And he left her once more alone.

Geneviève sank on her knees before the portrait, pressing her hands against her breaking heart.

"Maurice," said she, in a low tone, "pardon me; I did not expect to be happy, but I hoped to make you so. Maurice, I am depriving you of a joy that constituted your life; pardon me for causing your death, my best beloved."

Then severing a ringlet from her mass of curls, she bound it round the bouquet of violets, and placed them beneath the portrait, which insensible, and speechless as it was, still appeared to assume an expression of grief at her departure.

At least so it appeared to the unfortunate Geneviève, as she gazed at it through her tears.

"Well, are you ready, Madame?" demanded Dixmer.

"So soon?" murmured Geneviève.

"Oh, take your time, Madame," replied Dixmer; "I am in no hurry. Besides, I dare say Maurice will not be long, and I shall be delighted to thank him for all his kindness and hospitality toward you."

Geneviève trembled with terror at the idea of a meeting between her lover and husband. She automatically raised herself.

"It is finished, sir," said she, "and I am ready now."

Dixmer went out first, and the trembling Geneviève followed him with half-closed eyes, her head turned back to take a last fond look. They ascended the carriage which was waiting at the door. It rolled away.

As Geneviève had said, "It was finished."

CHAPTER XL.

THE TAVERN OF NOAH'S WELL.

This man attired in a jerkin, whom we have seen traversing with long and rapid strides the Salle des Pas-Perdus; whom we have heard, during the expedition of the architect Giraud, General Hanriot, and Richard, conversing with the turnkey left to guard the subterranean passage; this fierce patriot, who had introduced himself to Simon as having carried the head of the Princess de Lamballe, — found himself, on the next evening, about seven o'clock, at the tavern of Noah's Well, situated, as we have said, at the corner of the Rue de la Vieille Draperie.

He was seated at the end of a dirty room, redolent of tobacco and candles, pretending to devour a plate of fish swimming in melted butter.

The room where he supped was nearly deserted; two or three habitués of the house alone remained after the rest, enjoying the privilege to which their daily visit to the establishment entitled them.

The tables were for the most part empty; but we ought to remark, in honor to the tavern of Noah's Well, that the stained tablecloths denoted the departure of a satisfactory number of satisfied guests.

The last three successively disappeared, and at about a quarter to eight our patriot found himself alone. Then, with true aristocratic disgust, he pushed away the greasy plate, which an instant before he had appeared to think

so delicious, and drew from his pocket a tablet of Spanish chocolate, which he ate slowly and with a very different expression to that we have seen him endeavor to give to his countenance.

From time to time, while eating his chocolate and black bread, he cast toward a glass door, shaded by a red and white checked curtain, anxious and impatient glances. Sometimes he interrupted his frugal repast to listen; in short, evinced an absence of mind sufficient to induce the mistress of the mansion — seated at her counter, and near the door on which the patriot so eagerly fixed his eyes — to conclude that she might without vanity consider herself the object of his preoccupation.

At length the door-bell sounded in a way that made him start; he drew the plate again before him, and without attracting the woman's observation, threw half the contents to a famished-looking dog, and the remainder to a cat, who treated the dog to some stinging strokes of her velvet paws.

The door opened, and a man entered, dressed almost the same as the patriot, with the exception of the hairy cap, which he had replaced with the red bonnet. An enormous bunch of keys hung from his girdle, from which also depended a sword.

"My soup! my half-pint!" cried the man, entering the public room without removing his bonnet, but merely saluting the mistress of the house by a slight inclination of his head. With a sigh of fatigue, he seated himself at a table adjoining that where our patriot was discussing his black bread and chocolate.

The mistress of the tavern, in consequence of the deference she entertained for the new-comer, rose herself to order the requisite vianda.

The two men turned their backs to each other, — one to look into the street, the other toward the end of the room, — not a word was exchanged between them till the mistress of the tavern had disappeared.

When the door had closed behind her, by the light from a single candle, suspended from the end of an iron wire so as to divide the light equally between the two guests, the man in the bear-skin bonnet — thanks to the glass placed before him — at length saw that the room was deserted.

"Good-evening," said he to his companion, without turning round.

"Good-evening, sir!" said the new-comer.

"Well," asked the patriot, with the same affected indifference, "where are we now?"

"Well! it is done!"

"What is done?"

"As we agreed, I have had some conversation with Father Richard about the situation. I complained of swimming in the head, dimness of eyesight, — in short, of general ill-health."

"What then?"

"Father Richard called his wife, and she rubbed my temples with vinegar, and that revived me. Then, as we had arranged between us, I said that want of fresh air produced this swimming in the head, that I was of too full a habit, and that the duty at the Conciergerie, which contains at the present moment four hundred prisoners, was killing me."

"What did they say to that?"

"Richard's wife pitied me, but he showed me to the door."

"It was not enough to show you to the door."

"But wait! Then his wife, who is a good soul, re-

proached him with having no heart, seeing that I was the father of a family."

"What did he say to that?"

"He said that she was right; but that the very first condition annexed to the situation of turnkey was to remain within the prison to which he was attached; that the Republic did not jest, but would without ceremony cut the throats of those who grew dizzy in the exercise of their duty."

"The devil!" exclaimed the patriot.

"And he was not far wrong either; for since the Austrian has been there, it is a perfect hell of surveillance. One would act the spy there upon his own father." The patriot here gave his plate to the dog to lick, who was directly bitten by the cat.

"Go on!" said he, without turning round.

"At last, sir, I began to groan, and to say that I felt very ill; asked concerning the infirmary, and said I was certain my children would die of hunger if my pay was stopped."

"And Father Richard?"

"The Father Richard replied that turnkeys had no business with children."

"But you had his wife on your side, I suppose?"

"Fortunately! She made a great to-do with her husband, reproached him with possessing a bad and hard heart, and Richard finished by saying to me, —

"'Well! Citizen Gracchus, speak to some one of your friends who will advance you something on your wages, present him to me, and I promise to accept him as your substitute.' Upon which I left him, saying, —

"'Very good, Father Richard, I will directly seek one.'"

"And you have found one, my brave fellow."

At this moment the mistress of the establishment entered, bringing the Citizen Gracchus his soup and half-pint.

This did not suit either the patriot or Gracchus, who evidently had still some communications to make to each other.

"Madame," said the turnkey, "I have received a slight remuneration from Father Richard to-day, which will permit me to treat myself to some better fare. So bring me a pork cutlet with cucumbers and a bottle of Burgundy wine; send your servant to fetch the one from the pork-butcher's, and bring me the other yourself fresh from the cellar."

The hostess immediately went to execute his orders.

"Well," said the patriot, "you are an intelligent fellow."

"So far intelligent that I do not hide from myself what, notwithstanding all your fine promises, will be the end of us both. Do you suspect what it may be?"

"Yes, perfectly."

"We both stake our necks."

"Do not be uneasy about mine."

"It is not yours, sir, I must confess, that causes me the greatest uneasiness."

"It is your own?"

"Yes."

"But what if I estimate it at double its worth?"

"Ah, sir, there is nothing more precious than one's neck!"

"Not yours."

"Why not mine?"

"At this moment at least."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean to say your neck is not worth a cent, seeing

that if I, for example, were an agent of the Committee of Public Safety, you would be guillotined to-morrow."

The turnkey suddenly turned round so abruptly that the dog barked at him.

He was as pale as death.

"Neither turn round nor turn pale about it," said the patriot, "but finish your soup quietly. I am not an agent, friend. Let me once enter the Conciergerie, install me in your situation, give me the keys, and to-morrow I will count out to you fifty thousand francs in gold."

"Is all this true?"

"Well, you have excellent security, — my head."

The turnkey considered for some seconds.

"Come," said the patriot, who could see him in the glass, "do not indulge in meditations of evil. If you denounce me, as you will only have done your duty, you will not receive a sou from the Republic; if you serve me, and on the contrary are deficient in this same duty to the Republic, as it is unjust in this world to do anything for nothing, I will give you fifty thousand francs."

"I understand perfectly," said the turnkey. "I have every inducement to do what you require, but I fear the results — "

"The results! And what have you to fear? I will not denounce you; very far from it."

"No doubt."

"The day after I am duly installed, take a turn through the Conciergerie, and I will count you twenty-five rolls each containing two thousand francs. These you can easily dispose of in your two pockets. With the money I will give you a ticket to leave France. You go, and wherever you are you will be, if not rich, at least independent."

"Well! it is settled, Monsieur, happen what may. I am a poor devil who never dabbled in politics. France has always got on very well without me, and will not perish through any fault of mine; if you do a wicked action so much the worse for you."

"At all events," said the patriot, "I think I shall never do worse than they are doing at this moment."

"Sir, permit me to decline passing an opinion upon the politics of the National Convention."

"You are a pattern of philosophy and indifference. When, however, will you present me to Father Richard?"

"This evening, if you please."

"Yes, certainly; but who am I?"

"My cousin Mardoche."

"Mardoche, then, let it be; the name pleases me. What trade?"

"A breeches-maker."

"Either breeches-maker or tanner. I have that at my fingers' ends."

"Are you a tanner?"

"I could be one."

"True."

"At what time will you present me?"

"In half an hour if you like."

"At nine o'clock then."

"When shall I have the money?"

"To-morrow."

"You must be enormously rich."

"I am in easy circumstances."

"A former nobleman? Is it not so?"

"What does it matter to you?"

"To possess money, and give it away to run the risk of being guillotined; surely the former nobility must be great blockheads."

"What would you have? Your red Republicans have too much sense to leave any for others."

"Hush! here is my wine."

"This evening, in front of the Conciergerie."

"All right."

The patriot paid his bill and went out. At the door his stentorian voice was heard, —

"Come, Citizen, quick! make haste with the pork cutlets; my cousin Gracchus is dying of hunger!"

"Mardoche is a good fellow," said the turnkey, tasting the wine poured out for him by the hostess, while she regarded him tenderly.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE REGISTRAR OF THE MINISTER OF WAR.

THE patriot left, but he had not gone far. Through the smoky panes he kept watch over the turnkey, to discover if he entered into conversation with any of the agents of the Republican police, one of the best that ever existed, since one half of society closely watched the other, less from the desire of promoting the great glory of the government than for the greater security of their own heads.

But nothing occurred of what the patriot feared. At a few minutes before nine the turnkey rose, chucked the hostess under the chin, and went out.

The patriot rejoined him at the quay of the Conciergerie, and they entered the prison together.

On that same evening the affair was concluded, and Father Richard accepted Mardoche as a substitute for Gracchus.

Two hours before this arrangement took place, another scene had been enacted in a different part of the prison, which, although apparently of no interest, was possessed of vital importance to the principal personages of this history.

The registrar of the Conciergerie, fatigued with his day's labor, was folding up his papers and preparing to leave, when a man, conducted by Madame Richard, presented himself in his office.

"Citizen Registrar," said she, "here is your fellow registrar of the Minister of War, who comes on the part of the Citizen Minister to transfer some military entries."

"Ah, Citizen," said the registrar, "you are too late; I have just put away all my papers."

"Dear brother, pardon me," said the new-comer; "but we are really so overwhelmed with business that we can only achieve our course by turning our leisure to profit; and our leisure is the time occupied by others in eating and sleeping."

"That alters the case, my dear fellow; so make haste, for, as you observe, it is near supper-time, and I am very hungry. Have you your documents?"

"Here they are," said the registrar of the Minister of War, exhibiting a portfolio of papers which his brother, anxious as he was to leave, scrutinized with the strictest attention.

"Oh, they are all right!" said Richard's wife, "and my husband has already thoroughly inspected them."

"Never mind, never mind!" said the registrar, continuing his examination. The registrar of the Minister of War remained like a man who had expected the strict accomplishment of all due formalities.

"Perfectly correct," said the registrar of the Conciergerie; "and you can now commence as soon as you please. Have you many entries to transfer?"

"A hundred."

"That will occupy you for several days."

"Therefore dear brother, I wish to form a small establishment with you, — that is to say, if you will permit me."

"How am I to understand you?" said the registrar of the Conciergerie.

"I will explain it to you fully, if you will join us at supper this evening. You say you are hungry?"

"I do not deny it."

"Well, you shall see my wife, who is a good housekeeper; and you will become better acquainted with me, and will acknowledge me for a good companion."

"Faith, yes; you strike me as such, my dear brother; yet, notwithstanding —"

"Oh, come without ceremony, and partake of some oysters that I will purchase as I pass the Place du Châtelet, a roasted chicken, and a few dishes which Madame Durand excels in."

"You tempt me, my brother," said the registrar of the Conciergerie, delighted at the bill of fare, to which he was totally unaccustomed as a registrar paid by the Revolutionary Tribunal at the rate of two livres in paper money, in reality hardly equal to two francs.

"Then you will accept my invitation?"

"Yes, willingly."

"In that case, to work to-morrow; this evening let us go."

"All right; let us start."

"Are you ready?"

"In an instant, only I must first inform the gendarmes who guard the Austrian."

"Why must you tell them?"

"So that when they know that I am absent, and that there is no one at the wicket, they may become suspicious of every noise."

"Ah, that is a very wise precaution, faith!"

"You understand now?"

"Perfectly."

The registrar of the Conciergerie went and knocked at the wicket, which was opened by one of the gendarmes.

"Who is there?"

"I, the registrar, you know. I am going out. Good-evening, Citizen Gilbert."

"Good-evening, Citizen Registrar," and the wicket was shut.

The registrar of the Minister of War had paid the greatest attention to this scene, and while the door of the queen's prison remained open, his looks rapidly penetrated to the first compartment, when, seeing the other gendarme Duchesne seated at table, he felt perfectly assured the queen had only two guards.

When the registrar of the Conciergerie returned, his fellow registrar's face had resumed its expression of stolid indifference.

As they went out of the Conciergerie two men entered. They were the Citizen Gracchus and his cousin Mardoche.

On seeing each other, Cousin Mardoche and the registrar of the Minister of War each, by a simultaneous movement arising from the same impulse, pulled over their eyes, the one his hairy bonnet, the other his broad-brimmed hat.

"Who are these men?" asked the registrar of the Minister of War.

"I only know one of them; it is a turnkey named Gracchus."

"Ah!" said the other, with affected indifference, "do the turnkeys then go out of the Conciergerie?"

"They have their day."

The investigation did not proceed any further, and the new friends took the road to the Pont-au-Change. At the corner of the Place du Châtelet, the registrar of the Minister of War, following the programme he had announced, purchased some oysters, and continued his way by the Quai de Gèvres.

The dwelling of this individual was simple. The Citizen Durand inhabited three little rooms in the Place de Grève, in a house without any porter. Each tenant had a key of the door in the passage, and it was agreed that if any one had omitted to take his key, he should intimate the same by one, two, or three raps with the knocker, according to the story he inhabited, and any one who was waiting, and heard the signal, then descended and opened the door; but the Citizen Durand, having provided himself with his key, had not any occasion to knock. They ascended two flights of stairs, when the Citizen Durand drew another key from his pocket, and they both entered.

The registrar of the Palace found his friend's wife much to his taste. She was indeed a charming woman; an appearance of profound melancholy diffused over her countenance stamped it with an expression of deep interest. It has always been allowed that sadness is seductive in women, especially pretty women. It attracts all men without exception, even registrars, — for registrars are but men after all; and what man possessed with natural feeling would not wish to console a pretty woman in affliction, and, as the Citizen Dorat remarks, "Change the pale tint of the white rose to a livelier hue"?

The two registrars did ample justice to their excellent supper; it was only Madame Durand who ate nothing.

In the mean time conversation proceeded. The registrar inquired of his brother registrar — with a curiosity the more remarkable in these days, when such frightful dramas were daily enacted — concerning the customs of the Palace, the days of judgment, and the means of surveillance.

The registrar of the Palace, delighted at being listened to with so much deference, replied with the greatest complaisance, spoke of the manners of the jailers, of Fouquier

Tinville, and lastly of Citizen Sanson, the principal actor in the tragedies daily performed upon the Place de la Revolution.

Then in his turn, addressing his colleague and host, he made various inquiries concerning his vocation and ministry.

"Oh!" said Durand, "I am not so well informed as yourself, being a person of much less importance, seeing that I am rather secretary to the registrar than the incumbent of the place. I do the work of the registrar-in-chief, — an obscure employment, — laborious for me, profitable for them; but that is the way with all bureaucracies, not excepting those of the Revolution. Heaven and earth may perhaps change one day, but these things never."

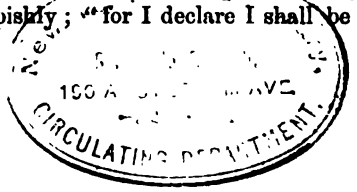
"Well, I will assist you, Citizen," said the registrar of the Palace, charmed with the excellence of his host's wine, and above all with the beautiful eyes of Madame Durand.

"Thanks!" said he to whom this offer had been made, "anything to vary the habits; and locality is some distraction to a poor employee. I wish to protract my work at the Conciergerie rather than to hasten it, and therefore thought if I might every day bring Madame Durand with me to the office, who is very dull here — "

"I do not see any inconvenience in that," said the registrar of the Palace, delighted with the prospect of the charming recreation afforded him by his colleague.

"She can dictate the papers," said the Citizen Durand; "and occasionally when our work is finished, if you have not found this evening unpleasant, you can return and spend an hour or two with us."

"Yes; but not too often," replied the registrar of the Palace, foppishly; "for I declare I shall be scolded if I


CIRCULATING DEPARTMENT

return later than usual to a small house in the Rue du Petit Musc."

"Oh, we shall arrange all that splendidly; shall we not, my dear?"

Madame Durand, pale and melancholy as usual, raised her eyes toward her husband, and replied, —

"What you wish shall be done."

Eleven o'clock struck, announcing it was time to retire. The registrar of the Palace rose and took leave of his new friends, expressing the great pleasure he felt in making their acquaintance.

The Citizen Durand conducted his friend to the landing, then re-entered the apartment.

"Go, Geneviève, go to bed!" said he.

The young woman made no reply, but rose directly, took her lamp, and withdrew to the bedroom on the right. Durand, or rather Dixmer, watched her departure, remained stationary for a moment with a gloomy, thoughtful expression of countenance, and then passed into his own chamber on the opposite side.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE TWO BILLETS.

From this time the registrar of the Minister of War worked every evening indefatigably in his colleague's office, while Madame Durand dictated from the registers previously prepared, which Durand copied with avidity.

Durand strictly examined everything, while appearing to notice nothing. He had remarked that every evening, at nine o'clock, a basket of provisions, carried by either Richard or his wife, was placed at the door.

The instant the registrar said to the gendarme, "I am going, Citizen," one of the guards, either Gilbert or Duchesne, came out, took the basket, and carried it to Marie Antoinette.

During three consecutive evenings, when Durand had remained rather later at his post, the basket also was left untouched, since it was only when opening the door to say adieu to the registrar that the gendarme took in the basket containing the provisions, which a quarter of an hour afterward was returned empty to the same place by one of the two guards.

On the evening of the fourth day, it was the beginning of October, when after the ordinary sitting the registrar of the Palace had withdrawn, and Durand, or rather Dixmer, remained alone with his wife; he laid down his pen, looked around and listened as if his very life was at stake; he then rose hastily, and running noiselessly toward the door of the wicket, raised the cloth which cov-

ered the contents of the basket, and in the new bread destined for the prisoner inserted a small silver case.

Pale and trembling with that emotion which even men of the strongest organization feel when they have done an act of the most vital importance, the moment for which has been long planned and patiently awaited, he quickly regained his seat, and sank down overpowered, placing one hand on his forehead, the other on his heart.

Geneviève regarded him in silence; indeed, since the day her husband had taken her from Maurice, she had never spoken till he addressed her first. But this time she first broke silence.

"Is it to be this evening?" she inquired.

"No; to-morrow," replied Dixmer.

He then rose, and having again looked and listened, closed the registers, and approaching the wicket, knocked at the door.

"What now?" said Gilbert.

"Citizen," said he, "I am going."

"Well," said the gendarme, from the end of the cell, "good-night."

"Good-night, Citizen Gilbert."

Durand heard the grinding of the bolts, and knew that the gendarme was opening the door. He went out.

In the passage leading from the apartment of Father Richard to the court, he jostled against a turnkey dressed in a bear-skin bonnet, and dangling a heavy bunch of keys.

Dixmer was much alarmed. Perhaps this man, brutal as the generality of his species, was about to interrogate him, to watch him, and perhaps to recognize him. He drew his hat over his eyes, while Geneviève concealed herself, as she best could, in the folds of her cloak. But he was mistaken.

"Pardon!" said the turnkey only, although he was the man who had been nearly overthrown.

Dixmer trembled at the sound of that sweet soft voice. But the turnkey was doubtless pressed for time; he glided into the passage, opened Richard's door, and disappeared. Dixmer continued his road, leading Geneviève.

"It is strange," said he, when outside and the gate had closed behind them, and the freshening breeze had cooled his fevered brow.

"Oh, yes, 't is very strange!" murmured Geneviève.

In former times they would have communicated to each other the cause of their astonishment, but Dixmer now confined his thoughts to his own breast, and combated them as an hallucination; while Geneviève contented herself, on turning the corner of the Pont-au-Change, with casting a last look at the dark and gloomy Palace, where something like the phantom of a lost friend awoke in her memory many sweet and bitter remembrances.

They both reached La Grève without having exchanged a single word.

During this time the Gendarme Gilbert had brought in the basket of provisions intended for the queen. It contained some fruit, a cold chicken, a bottle of white wine, a carafe of water, and half a loaf.

Having first raised the napkin, and ascertained that everything was arranged as usual, he opened the screen.

"Citizeness," said he, "here is your supper."

Marie Antoinette divided the bread; but as her fingers pressed it, they came in contact with the silver. In an instant she comprehended that the bread contained something unusual.

When she looked around her the guard had already disappeared.

The queen remained for an instant motionless, calcu-

lating his retiring footsteps. When she felt certain he was seated by his comrade, and not till then, she drew the case from its place of concealment. It contained a billet, which she opened, and read as follows: —

"Madame, be ready to-morrow at the hour when you receive this billet, as to-morrow at this hour a female will be introduced into your Majesty's prison. This female will exchange dresses with you, and you will then quit the Conciergerie on the arm of one of your most devoted servants.

"Do not be alarmed at any noise that passes in the first compartment; let neither cries nor groans deter you, only attire yourself quickly in the dress and mantle of the female who comes to take your Majesty's place."

"This is devotion!" murmured the queen. "Thank God, I am not, as it is said, an object of execration to all!"

She then re-read the billet, when the second paragraph attracted her attention, — "Let neither cries nor groans deter you."

"Oh! that means they will sacrifice my two guards. Poor men, who have evinced so much kindness and pity toward me! Oh, never! — never!"

She tore off the blank portion of the letter, and having neither pen nor ink, pricked on the paper the following words, —

I neither can nor will accept the sacrifice of any one's life in exchange for my own. M. A.

She then replaced the paper in the case, which she concealed in the other half of the broken bread.

This operation was just completed when ten o'clock struck; and the queen, holding the piece of bread in her hand, sadly counted the strokes which vibrated slowly

and distantly, when she heard at one of the windows opening upon the court termed the women's court a grating sound, like that produced by a diamond dividing the glass. This noise was followed by a slight knock upon the window, which was several times repeated, with the intention of concealing the cough of a man. Then at the corner of the pane a small roll of paper appeared, which glided slowly down and fell on the inside of the wall. The queen then heard the sound of keys jingling and clashing against each other, and receding footsteps on the pavement.

She was aware that the window had been perforated at this corner, and that through this aperture the departing individual had conveyed a paper which was doubtless a billet. It was now lying on the ground. The queen fixed her eyes upon it, listening if either of her guards was approaching, but heard them conversing in a low tone as they usually did, as if by a tacit agreement not to annoy her with their voices. Then she rose softly, holding her breath, and secured the paper. Some minute and hard substance slipped from it, which, falling on the bricks, sounded like metal. It was the most exquisite file that could be imagined, — more of the jewel than the tool, — one of those steel springs, with which the most feeble and uninitiated hand could, in a quarter of an hour, divide a bar of iron. The paper said: —

"Madame, to-morrow, at half-past nine, a man will be conversing with the gendarmes who guard you, through the window of the women's court. During this time your Majesty will saw the third bar of your window, going from the left to the right. Cut slanting. A quarter of an hour will suffice for your Majesty; and then be prepared to escape through the window. This advice reaches you from one of your most devoted and faithful subjects; one who has consecrated his

life to your Majesty's service, and would be happy also to sacrifice it for you."

"Oh!" murmured the queen, "it must be a snare. But no; this writing appears familiar to me, — it is the same as at the Temple. It is — it must be that of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge! God is perhaps willing that I should escape."

And the queen fell on her knees, and took refuge in prayer, the only balm and consolation undenied to the unfortunate prisoner.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE PREPARATIONS OF DIXMER.

The morrow, prefaced by a sleepless night, at length arrived, presenting a terrible appearance, and it might, without exaggeration, be said that the sky was the color of blood.

Indeed, each day at this epoch and in this year, however beautiful the sun, had a livid hue.

The queen slept with difficulty, and it was a sleep without repose. Hardly had she closed her eyes when she seemed to see blood, when she seemed to hear shrieks.

She had dropped asleep with the file in her hand. One part of the day was devoted by her to prayer, and the guards, seeing her often thus engaged, did not feel any alarm at what they considered an increase of religious feeling.

From time to time, however, she examined the file transmitted to her by one of her intended deliverers, and compared the fragility of the instrument with the strength of the bar.

Fortunately, these bars were only secured in the wall on one side, — that is to say, at the lower part.

The upper part was set in a crossbar; the lower part divided, there was only to pull the bar, and it of course would yield.

But it was not the physical difficulties which worried the queen. She perfectly comprehended that the thing was possible, and it was this very possibility which caused hope, like a blood-red meteor, to dazzle her eyes.

She felt that to reach her, her friends must necessarily sacrifice her guards; and could she at any price consent to the death of the only individuals who, for a length of time, had evinced any interest in her, or pity for her?

On the other hand, beyond these bars which she had been directed to saw, over the bodies of the two men who would have to die in endeavoring to prevent her deliverers from reaching her, were life, liberty, and perhaps vengeance, — three things so sweet, especially to a woman, that she asked pardon of God for so earnestly desiring them.

She believed, moreover, that not the slightest suspicion agitated the minds of her guards; that they had not any idea of a snare (if such a thing existed) into which it was intended their prisoner should fall.

These simple men would have betrayed themselves to eyes so much exercised as those of this woman, habituated to detect evil from having so severely suffered from it.

The queen, then, entirely abandoned the idea that these double overtures were contrived as a trap; but as the fear of being betrayed into this snare disappeared, the still greater apprehension increased of bloodshed for her sake, before her very eyes.

"Strange destiny! sublime sight!" murmured she; "two conspiracies united to save a poor queen, or rather a poor female prisoner who has had no means of inducing or encouraging these conspiracies which are about to take place at the same moment! Who knows? Perhaps there may be one only. Perhaps it may be a double mine, leading to one and the same point.

"If I wished, I might then be saved.

"But a poor woman sacrificed in my stead! — two men killed before this woman could reach me! God and the future might perhaps forgive me. Impossible! impossible!"

Then passed and repassed in her mind visions of the great devotion of servants for their masters, and the ancient traditions of the right exercised by masters over the lives of their retainers, — phantasies almost effaced from the mind of expiring royalty.

"Anne of Austria would have accepted this," said she. "Anne of Austria would have set aside every consideration to the safety of the royal person.

"Anne of Austria was of the same blood, and was almost in the same situation as myself.

"What madness to have come to France to pursue Anne of Austria's principles of royalty! Was I not brought hither? Two kings said, 'It is important that two royal children who have never seen or loved each other, who perhaps never may love each other, should be married at the same altar, to die upon the same scaffold.

"And then will not my death accelerate that of my poor child, who in the eyes of my few friends is still king of France?

"And when my son, like his father, is dead, will not their shades both smile on me in pity, seeing me, in order to spare some drops of plebeian blood, stain with my own the remains of the throne of Saint Louis?"

In this ever-increasing anguish of thought, this fever of doubt whose pulsations went on in geometrical progression, and in a tempest of terror and fear, the unhappy queen continued till the arrival of night.

She had several times closely scrutinized her guards; but they had never appeared more composed.

Never had she been more forcibly struck by the invariable kindness and attention of these two uneducated men.

When the darkness of night reigned in the cell; when

the steps of the patrol, the noise of resounding arms, and the barking of dogs awoke the echoes of the gloomy vaults; when all the horrors of the prison revealed themselves, gloomy and hopeless, — Marie Antoinette, subdued by the natural weakness of a woman, rose affrighted.

"Oh, I will fly! I will fly!" said she. "Yes, yes; I will fly! When he comes, when he speaks, I will saw the bar. I will await what God and my deliverers ordain me. I owe myself to my children. They shall not murder them; or if they slay them, and I am free — oh, then, at least — "

She did not conclude; her eyes closed, and her deep emotion checked all utterance. This was a frightful vision to the unfortunate queen, enclosed with gratings and iron bars. But soon this vision disappeared, and in its stead another presented itself to her view. Gratings and bolts had vanished. She saw herself in the midst of a dark, stern, inflexible army; she orders the fire to consume, the sword to leap from the scabbard, and vengeance to be taken on a people she will no longer claim as her own.

During this time Gilbert and Duchesne were conversing tranquilly, and preparing their evening repast.

At this time, also, Dixmer and Geneviève entered the Conciergerie, and installed themselves in the office as usual. At the end of an hour the registrar of the Palace, having completed his business, according to custom took his departure, leaving them alone to themselves.

Directly the door had closed on his colleague, Dixmer rushed toward the empty basket placed at the door in exchange for that of the evening. He seized the bread, broke it, and found the case. The queen's answer was enclosed within it; he grew pale on reading it.

Geneviève observed him tear it into a thousand pieces, and throw them into the mouth of the burning stove.

"It is well," said he; "all is arranged."

Then turning toward Geneviève, —

"Come here, Madame," said he; "I must speak with you, and must speak low." Geneviève, motionless and cold as marble, gave a gesture of assent, and approached him.

"The time has arrived, Madame; listen to me!"

"Yes, sir."

"You prefer a death beneficial to your cause, — a death that will insure you the blessings of your party and pity from the whole nation, — to an ignominious and revengeful end of life, do you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"I might have killed you on the spot when I found you in the house of your lover; but a man who, like myself, consecrates his life to a holy and honorable cause, ought to be able to profit by his own private griefs by rendering them subservient to this cause. This I have done, or rather intend to do. I have, as you see, denied myself the pleasure of doing myself justice, and have also spared your lover."

Something resembling a fugitive but appalling smile flitted over the lips of Geneviève.

"But as for your lover, you who know me should be well aware that I only bide my time."

"Monsieur," said Geneviève, "I am ready. Then wherefore all this prelude?"

"You are ready?"

"Yes, I am ready. Kill me, if you choose; you have good cause to do so."

Dixmer looked at Geneviève, and started in spite of himself. She at this moment appeared sublimely beau-

tiful; a glory the most brilliant of all shone around her, — the glory that emanates from love.

"To continue," said Dixmer, "I have informed the queen; she expects you, notwithstanding she will in all probability raise numerous objections. You must overrule them all."

"Give me your orders, sir, and I will execute them."

"Immediately," continued Dixmer, "I shall knock at the door; Gilbert will open it, and with this poniard —" here Dixmer threw open his coat, and half drawing from its scabbard a double-edged poniard — "with this I shall kill him."

Geneviève shuddered.

Dixmer made a motion with his hand to command her attention.

"The instant I strike him, dart into the second chamber, that of the queen. There is, as you are aware, no door, only a screen. You will exchange clothes with her while I despatch the other soldier. Then I shall take the queen's arm, and pass through the wicket with her."

"Very well," said Geneviève, coldly.

"You understand me?" said Dixmer. "You have been seen each evening in your black taffeta mantle which conceals your face. Place your mantle upon her Majesty, and arrange it on her precisely as you have been accustomed to arrange it on yourself."

"All shall be done as you desire, sir."

"It remains now for me to pardon and to thank you, Madame."

Geneviève shook her head with a scornful smile.

"I neither want your pardon nor your thanks, sir," said she, extending her hand. "What I have done, or rather am about to do, would efface a crime. I have

only been guilty of a weakness; and again, this weakness — recall your own conduct, sir — you all but forced me to commit. I withdrew myself from him; you drove me back into his arms; so you are at the same time instigator, judge, and avenger. It remains for me to pardon you my death; and I do pardon you. It is I who should thank you for death, since life has become insupportable to me, separated from the only man I love; since that hour especially when you severed by your savage vengeance every tie that bound me to him."

Dixmer drove his nails into his flesh. He strove to reply, but his voice failed him.

He moved toward the wicket.

"Time passes," said he, at last. "Madame, every moment is of consequence. Are you ready?"

"I have told you, sir," replied Geneviève, with the calmness and courage of a martyr, "I await you."

Dixmer collected his papers, saw that the gates were fast closed, so that no one could enter the wicket, and then wished to reiterate his instructions.

"It is unnecessary, sir," said Geneviève. "I know perfectly all I have to do."

"Then, adieu!" and Dixmer extended his hand, as if at this supreme moment all recrimination was effaced before the grandeur of the situation and the sublimity of the sacrifice.

Geneviève, shuddering, touched with the tips of her fingers the proffered hand of her husband.

"Place yourself near me, Madame, and the moment I have struck Gilbert, pass on."

"I am ready."

Then Dixmer grasped in his right hand his poinard; with his left he knocked at the gate.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE PREPARATIONS OF THE CHEVALIER.

DURING the scene described in the preceding chapter as passing at the door of the register-office leading into the prison of the queen, or rather into the first compartment occupied by the two gendarmes, other preparations were taking place on the opposite side, — that is to say, in the women's court.

Suddenly a man appeared, like a statue of stone which had detached itself from the wall. He was followed by two dogs, and was humming the "Ça ira," a song much in vogue at this period. He held in his hand a large bunch of keys, which, in passing, he had rattled against the bars which barricaded the window of the queen.

The royal prisoner at first started, but recognizing the signal, immediately opened her window softly to commence her work, with a hand more experienced than would have been believed; for more than once in the blacksmith's shop where her royal husband amused himself by passing part of the day, she had with her delicate fingers handled instruments similar to that upon which at this moment depended her every chance of safety and deliverance.

Directly the man with the keys heard the queen's window open, he knocked at that of the gendarmes.

"Ah! ah!" said Gilbert, looking through the window, "here is the Citizen Mardoche."

"Himself," said the turnkey. "Well, but it appears you keep strict watch?"

"Much as usual, Citizen Key-bearer. It seems to me you do not often find us at fault?"

"Ah!" said Mardoche; "and vigilance is more than ever necessary to-night."

"Bah!" said Duchesne, who had now approached.

"Truly."

"Why, then?"

"Open the window, and I will tell you all about it."

Gilbert opened it, and shook hands with Mardoche, who had already made friends with the two gendarmes.

"What is it, Citizen Mardoche?" repeated Gilbert.

"The sitting of the Convention has been rather hot to-day. Have you read about it?"

"No. What passed then?"

"It was first stated that the Citizen Hébert had made a discovery."

"What?"

"It is, that the conspirators believed to be dead are found to be alive, and very much alive indeed."

"Oh! yes," said Gilbert; "Delessart and Thierry; I have heard speak of that. They are in England, the scoundrels!"

"And the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?" asked the key-bearer, raising his voice so that the queen might hear.

"What, is he in England also?"

"Not at all," said Mardoche; "he is in France," still speaking in the same loud key.

"He has returned, then?"

"He has never quitted it."

"Well, he, for one, has good courage," said Duchesne.

"Indeed, he has."

"Well, are they going to arrest him?"

"Certainly; but that is much easier said than done."

At this moment the queen's file grated so forcibly

upon the iron bars that the turnkey feared it might be heard, notwithstanding all his efforts to drown the sound. He hastily trod upon the paw of the nearest of his dogs, which uttered a prolonged howl of pain.

"Oh, poor beast!" said Gilbert.

"Bah!" said the turnkey, "he had not put on his clogs. Be quiet, Girondin; will you be quiet?"

"Is your dog named Girondin, Citizen Mardoche?"

"Yes; that is the name I have given him."

"But pray go on with what you were telling us," said Duchesne, who, imprisoned himself, took that lively interest in news that all prisoners feel.

"I was telling you that in the Citizen Hébert you see a good patriot; and Hébert has made a motion to return the Austrian to the Temple."

"And why so?"

"Faith! because he pretends that she was only withdrawn from the Temple to remove her from the immediate inspection of the Commune of Paris."

"Yes; and from the attempts of that cursed Maison-Rouge," said Gilbert; "it seems too that the subterranean passage still exists."

"That was the reply the Citizen Sauterre made; but Hébert said, the instant that was defeated there was no more danger; that at the Temple, fewer precautions were requisite for the security of Marie Antoinette than here; and finally, that the Temple was a much more secure place than the Conciergerie."

"Faith!" said Gilbert, "for my part, I wish they would remove her again to the Temple."

"I understand; you are tired of the confinement?"

"No; but it makes me melancholy."

Maison-Rouge coughed loudly, as the noise of the file biting through the iron bar was distinctly heard.

"Well, what have they decided on?" said Duchesne, when the turnkey's cough had subsided.

"It is settled that she shall remain here, but that her trial shall take place immediately."

"Poor woman!" said Gilbert.

Duchesne, whose sense of hearing was no doubt more acute than that of his colleague, or his attention less engrossed by the recital of Mardoche, stooped down to listen on the left side of the compartment.

The turnkey saw the movement.

"So you see, Citizen Duchesne," said he, in an animated tone, "the attempts of the conspirators will become the more desperate from the fact of their having less time before them for their execution. They are going to double the guards of the prisons; so look out, Citizen Gendarme, since the matter in question is nothing less than the irruption of an armed force into the Conciergerie. They will murder all, sacrifice every impediment, till they effect an entrance to the queen, — to the widow of Capet, I mean to say."

"Ah! bah! How can these conspirators of yours get in?"

"Disguised as patriots, they will pretend to recommence the 2d of September, the rascals! and when once the gates are open, good-night!"

There was an instant's silence, produced by the astonishment of the guards.

The turnkey heard with emotions of joy and terror the continued grating of the file. Nine o'clock struck.

At the same moment there was a knock at the wicket, but the gendarmes, preoccupied, did not reply.

"Well, we shall watch, we shall watch!" said Gilbert.

"And if necessary, will die at our post like stanch Republicans," added Duchesne.

"She must soon be done," said the turnkey to himself, wiping the drops of perspiration from his face.

"And you on your side," said Gilbert, "keep on the lookout, I presume? They would spare you no more than us, were such an event as you have been talking of to take place."

"I should think so," said the turnkey. "I pass the night in going the round; thus I am always on the alert. The rest of you at least relieve each other, and can sleep every other night."

At this moment a second summons at the wicket was heard. Mardoche started; any event, however trifling, might mar the execution of his project.

"What is it, then?" demanded he, in spite of himself.

"Nothing, nothing!" said Gilbert; "it is only the registrar of the Minister of War. He is going now, and comes to inform me of it."

"Oh, very well!" said Mardoche.

The registrar still continued to knock.

"All right!" cried Gilbert, without leaving the window. "Good-night! Adieu!"

"I think he is speaking to you," said Duchesne, turning toward the door. The voice of the registrar was then heard.

"Come here, Citizen Gendarme," said he; "I wish to speak to you."

This voice, which appeared affected by some strong emotion which deprived it of its natural accent, startled the turnkey, who fancied he recognized it.

"What do you want, Citizen Durand?" asked Gilbert.

"I wish to speak a word with you."

"Well, you can tell me to-morrow."

"No, this evening; it must be this evening," replied the same voice.

"Hah!" murmured the turnkey, "what is about to happen now? It is Dixmer's voice."

Sinister and vibrating, this voice seemed to borrow something funereal from the far-off echoes of the gloomy corridor.

Duchesne turned round.

"Well," said Gilbert, "if he wishes it I must go," and he directed his steps toward the door.

The turnkey availed himself of this moment when the attention of the two gendarmes was thus occupied by this unforeseen circumstance. He ran toward the window of the queen.

"Is it done?" said he.

"I have more than half finished," said the queen.

"Oh, for the love of God!" murmured he; "make haste! make haste!"

"Hallo! Citizen Mardoche," said Duchesne, "what has become of you?"

"Here I am," said the turnkey, returning quickly to the window of the first compartment.

At that very moment, and as he turned to resume his former station, a frightful cry resounded through the prison, then an oath, and the ring of a sword snatched from its scabbard.

"Villain! brigand!" cried Gilbert, and the sound of a struggle was heard in the corridor.

At the same moment the door opened, displaying to the eyes of the turnkey two shadows struggling in the wicket, and thus affording free passage to a female, who, pushing aside Duchesne, rushed into the queen's chamber.

Duchesne, without noticing the woman, ran to his comrade's assistance.

The turnkey sprang toward the other window, and beheld the female on her knees before the queen, praying

and supplicating her Majesty to exchange clothes with her.

He lowered his burning eyes, endeavoring to gain a clearer view of this woman whom he feared he had already recognized too well. All at once he uttered a dreadful cry.

"Geneviève! Geneviève!" murmured he.

The queen had dropped the file from her hand, and seemed transfixed with despair. Here, alas! was another abortive attempt.

The turnkey seized the bar with both hands, shook it with all his strength; but the file had not accomplished its work, the bar of iron would not yield to his efforts.

Meanwhile Dixmer had hurled Gilbert back into the prison, and would have entered with him, but Duchesne, leaning against the door, prevented him. But he was unable to close it, for Dixmer, in despair, had placed his arm between the gate and the wall.

In his hand he still retained the poniard, which in the contest, checked by the buckle of the belt, had glided over the gendarme's breast, tearing open his coat and lacerating his flesh.

The two gendarmes encouraged each other to reunite their efforts, at the same time calling loudly for assistance.

Dixmer felt his arm must break; he placed his shoulder against the door, shook it violently, and succeeded in withdrawing his bruised arm.

The door closed with a great noise; Duchesne pushed the bolts, while Gilbert turned the key.

A rapid step was heard in the corridor, then all was over. The two gendarmes looked at each other, and searched everywhere around them.

They detected the sound of the assumed turnkey wrenching the bar.

Gilbert rushed into the queen's chamber, where he found Geneviève entreating her Majesty on her knees to exchange clothes with her.

Duchesne seized his gun and ran to the window; he discovered a man hanging to the bar, which he shook with rage, and tried in vain to scale.

He pointed his gun.

The young man saw it levelled at him.

"Oh, yes! yes!" cried he, "kill me! kill me!" and sublime in his despair, he bared his breast to the bullet.

"Chevalier," said the queen, — "Chevalier, I entreat you to live."

At the sound of the queen's voice the Chevalier sank upon his knees. The gun was discharged, but this movement saved him; the ball passed over his head. Geneviève, imagining her friend was dead, fell upon the ground without sense or motion. When the smoke disappeared, no one was seen in the women's court.

Ten minutes afterward, thirty soldiers, led by two commissioners, searched the Conciergerie even to its most inaccessible retreats.

They discovered no one; the registrar had passed, calm and smiling, before Father Richard's arm-chair.

As to the turnkey, he had gone out crying, "Alarm! alarm!"

The sentinel opposed his egress with his bayonet, but his two dogs seized the soldier by the throat.

Geneviève alone was arrested, interrogated, and imprisoned.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE INQUIRY.

We can no longer leave in forgetfulness one of the principal personages of this history, he who, during the accomplishment of the various incidents of the preceding chapter had suffered most of all, and whose anxieties merit the liveliest sympathy on the part of our readers.

The sun shone gloriously in the Rue de la Monnaie, and the gossips were discoursing merrily at their doors, as if for the last ten months a mist of blood had not hung over the city, when Maurice returned home, bringing, as he had promised, the cabriolet with him. He gave the bridle of the horse to a shoeblack, on the pavement of Saint Eustache, and hastily ran upstairs, his heart filled with joy.

Love is a vivifying sentiment. It animates hearts long deadened to every other sensation; it peoples the desert; it resuscitates before the eyes the shade of the beloved one; it causes the voice which sings in the soul of the lover to display before him the entire creation illumined by the brilliant rays of hope and happiness, — at the same time it is egotistical, blinding him who loves to all but the existence of the beloved object.

Maurice neither saw these women nor listened to their commentaries; he saw only Geneviève preparing for a departure which was at last to bring them durable happiness; he heard only Geneviève singing carelessly her customary song, and this little song trilled so sweetly in

his ear that he might have sworn he was listening to the varied modulations of her voice, mingled with the less harmonious sound of closing locks.

Upon the landing Maurice stopped; the door was half open; it was generally kept closed, and this circumstance surprised Maurice. He looked all around, thinking Geneviève was in the corridor. She was not there. He entered, looked in the antechamber, the dining-room, the parlor, the bed-chamber; but anteroom, parlor, and bed-chamber were all empty. He loudly called. No one replied.

The official, as he knew, had gone out. Maurice imagined that during his absence Geneviève had perhaps required some cord to fasten her trunk, or some refreshments to store in the carriage, and had gone out to purchase them. He thought it imprudent; but although every moment his anxiety increased, he as yet feared nothing serious.

Maurice waited for some time, walking up and down the room with long impatient strides, and occasionally leaning out of the window, which, half opened, admitted puffs of air charged heavily with rain.

But soon he believed that he heard a step upon the staircase; he listened, it was not that of Geneviève; he ran to the landing, looked over the palisade, and recognized the official, who leisurely mounted the stairs after the manner of domestics.

"Scævola!" cried he.

The official raised his head.

"Ah! is it you, Citizen?"

"Yes. Where is the lady?"

"The lady?" demanded Scævola, with much surprise, as he continued mounting the stairs.

"Certainly! Have you seen her below?"

"No."

"Go down, then, and ask the porter, and inquire of all the neighbors!"

Scævola descended.

"Quicker! quicker!" said his master; "do you not see I am burning with impatience?"

After waiting five or six minutes, and Scævola not having made his appearance, Maurice re-entered the apartment and again leaned out of the window. He saw Scævola enter several shops and leave them without having gained any fresh intelligence. He called him. The official raised his head, and saw his master impatiently looking from the window. Maurice signed to him to come up.

"It is impossible that she has gone out," said Maurice to himself, and again he called, "Geneviève! Geneviève!"

All was silent as death; even the solitary chamber appeared no longer to have an echo. Scævola reappeared.

"Well?" demanded Maurice.

"The porter is the only person who has seen her."

"The porter has seen her; how was that?"

"He saw her go out."

"She has gone out, then?"

"It seems so."

"Alone! It is impossible Geneviève would go out alone."

"She was not alone, Citizen; she had a man with her."

"How! a man with her?"

"That is what the porter says, at least."

"Go and seek him. I must find out who this man was."

Scævola made a step toward the door, then, turning, "Wait," said he, appearing to reflect.

"What is it?" said Maurice. "Speak, or you will be the death of me!"

"Perhaps it was the man who ran after me."

"What for?"

"To tell me that you wished the key."

"What key, stupid! will you not tell me?"

"The key of your apartment."

"You gave the key of the apartment to a stranger?" cried Maurice, seizing the official by the collar with both hands.

"It was not to a stranger, sir; it was to one of your friends."

"Ah, yes! to one of my friends. It is Lorin, no doubt. She has gone out with Lorin," and smiling a ghastly smile Maurice wiped away the drops of agony which had gathered on his brow.

"No, sir; no, it was not he. Zounds! I think I should know Monsieur Lorin."

"Who was it, then?"

"You know the man who came here one day?"

"What day?"

"The day when you were so sad; and he took you away with him, and you returned so happy."

Scævola had remarked all these things.

Maurice regarded him with a bewildered air; a cold shudder ran through his body. Then after a long silence:

"Dixmer!" cried he.

"By my faith! yes. I think it was he, Citizen."

Maurice tottered, and fell back upon a chair.

"Oh, my God!" murmured he.

When he re-opened his eyes they encountered the violets, forgotten, or rather left there by Geneviève.

He rushed toward them, seized and kissed them; then, remarking where she had placed them, —

"There is no longer any doubt," said he, "these violets — It is her last adieu."

When Maurice turned round he perceived for the first time that the trunk was half full, the rest of the linen was on the floor, or in the half-opened wardrobe.

The linen which lay upon the floor had no doubt fallen from Geneviève's hand at the appearance of Dixmer.

It was all explained now. The scene rose vivid and terrible before his eyes, between these four walls that had lately witnessed so much happiness.

Till now Maurice had remained crushed and heart-broken. Now the reaction was fearful. His rage bordered on frenzy.

He rose, closed the window, took from the top of his desk a pair of pistols, ready loaded for their intended journey, looked to the priming, and finding all right placed them in his pocket.

He also furnished himself with two rolls of louis, which notwithstanding his patriotism he had thought it prudent to conceal at the bottom of a drawer, and taking his sabre in his hand, —

"Scævola," said he, "you are attached to me, I think; you have served my father and myself for fifteen years."

"Yes, Citizen," replied the official, terrified at the pallor and nervous trembling he had never before remarked in his master, who had always been justly considered one of the most courageous and vigorous of men, — "yes; what are your orders for me?"

"Listen! if this lady who lived here — " He stopped; his voice trembled so much in pronouncing these words that he was unable to proceed. "If she should return," continued he, after a moment's pause, "receive her, close the door after her, take this gun, and station yourself upon

the staircase; and for your head, for your life, for your soul, do not permit a single person to enter here! If any one should try to break through the door, defend it! Strike! kill! kill! and fear nothing, Scævola, for I will answer for all."

The young man's impetuous harangue, his vehement confidence, electrified Scævola.

"I will not only kill, but will even suffer death for the Citizeness Geneviève," said he.

"Thanks. Now attend! This apartment is odious to me, and I shall not enter it again until I find her; if she has been able to effect her escape, if she return, place before the window the Japan vase with the china-asters, which she loved so much. That is, during the day. At night, put a lantern. Every time I pass the end of the street I shall know, and if I see neither vase nor lantern I shall still continue my researches."

"Be prudent, sir! Oh, pray be prudent!" continued Scævola.

His master made no reply, but rushing from the chamber flew down the staircase as if possessed of wings, and ran toward Lorin's house.

It would be difficult to paint the astonishment and rage of our worthy poet when he heard the news; we might as well attempt to indite the touching elegies with which Orestes inspired Pylades.

"And you do not know where she is?" he repeated, incessantly.

"Lost! disappeared!" shrieked Maurice, in accents of despair, "he has killed her, Lorin! he has killed her!"

"No, my dear friend; no, Maurice; he has not killed her; it is not after so many days of reflection that he would be likely to kill a woman like Geneviève. If he had thought of doing so, he would have done it on the

spot, and have left her corpse there in token of his just vengeance. No, no; he has taken her away, only too happy at having regained his lost treasure."

"You do not know him, Lorin; you do not know him! This man had something fatal in his look."

"You are mistaken," said Lorin; "he always struck me as a brave man. He has taken her as a sacrifice. He will get himself arrested with her; and they will die together. Ah, there is the danger!"

These words redoubled Maurice's fury.

"I will find her! I will find her, or perish in the attempt!" cried he.

"Oh, as to that, we are certain to find her," said Lorin; "only calm yourself. They fail in success who do not reflect; and when agitated as you are, we reflect badly and unwisely."

"Adieu, Lorin, adieu!"

"Where are you going, then?"

"I am going."

"You will leave me, then? Why is that?"

"Because this concerns me only. I alone should risk my life to save Geneviève's."

"Do you wish to die?"

"I will face all. I will find out the president of the Committee of Surveillance. I will speak to Hébert, to Danton, to Robespierre. I will avow all; but she must be restored to me."

"Very well," said Lorin; and without adding another word he rose, adjusted his belt, put on his military cap, and as Maurice had done, provided himself with a pair of pistols, ready loaded, which he put in his pocket.

"Let us go," said he, simply.

"But you will compromise yourself," said Maurice.

"Well! what of that?"

"Where shall we seek her first?" asked Maurice.

"We will first search in the old quarter, you know, — the old Rue Saint Jacques; then we will watch for Maison-Rouge, as where he is, doubtless Dixmer will be also; then we will draw near the houses in the Vieille Corderie. You know they talk of transferring Marie Antoinette to the Temple; believe me, men like them will not, till the last moment, abandon the hope of saving her."

"Yes," repeated Maurice; "you are right — Maison-Rouge, do you think he is in Paris?"

"Dixmer is certainly."

"It is true, it is true; of course they will be together!" said Maurice, to whom these vague ideas seemed partially to restore reason.

The two friends commenced their search immediately, but all in vain. Paris is large and well adapted for concealment. Never was a pit known to conceal more obscurely the secret confided to its keeping by crime or misery.

A hundred times Maurice and Lorin passed over the Place de Grève, a hundred times passed the house that contained Geneviève, watched incessantly by Dixmer, as the priests watch the victim destined for sacrifice.

Geneviève on her side, seeing herself destined to perish, like all generous souls accepted the sacrifice, and only wished to die quietly and unnoticed; besides, she dreaded less for Dixmer than for the cause of the queen the publicity that Maurice would not fail to give to his vengeance.

She kept, then, a silence as profound as if death had already sealed her lips.

In the mean time, without saying anything to Lorin, Maurice had applied to the members of the terrible Com-

mittee of Public Safety ; and Lorin, without speaking to Maurice, had, on his part, determined to adopt similar proceedings.

Thus on the same day a red cross was affixed by Fouquier Tinville to both their names, and the word "Suspects" united them in a sanguinary embrace.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE SENTENCE.

On the twenty-third day of the month of the second year of the French Republic, one and indivisible, corresponding to the 14th of October, 1793, old style, as it was then called, a curious crowd had since the morning invaded the galleries of the hall where the revolutionary sittings were held.

The passages of the Palace, the avenues of the Conciergerie, were lined with greedy and impatient spectators, who made over one to another their reports and passions, as the waves transmit their froth and foam.

Notwithstanding the curiosity with which each spectator was agitated, and perhaps even on account of this curiosity, each wave of this sea, swaying, pressed between two barriers, — the outer barrier which urged it forward, the inner barrier which urged it backward, — each wave kept, in this flux and reflux, almost the same position which it had at first taken. Thus those more conveniently situated, comprehending it was necessary they should obtain forgiveness for their good fortune, kept this object in view by transmitting to their neighbors less comfortably and commodiously placed than themselves, and who in their turn recounted to others, the first words they heard, and all they saw.

Near the door of the Tribunal a group of men was collected, rudely disputing for ten lines of space in width and height, — for ten lines in breadth sufficed to see be-

tween two shoulders the corner of the hall and the form of the judges; for ten lines in height was sufficient to overlook the entire hall and see the face of the accused.

Unfortunately, this entrance to the passage of the hall, this narrow defile, was almost entirely filled by a man with broad shoulders, and his arms akimbo, who most effectually excluded the wavering crowd ready to drop into the hall if this rampart of flesh were to give way.

This immovable man was young and handsome; and at every push bestowed on him by the crowd, he shook his head of hair, thick as a lion's mane, under which gleamed a dark and resolute expression; then, when either by a look or a movement he had repelled the crowd and resisted their violent attacks, he fell back into his attentive immobility.

A hundred times this compact mass had, notwithstanding, striven hard to overthrow him,—as, from his great height, to see anything behind him was utterly impossible,—but, as we have said, firm as a rock, he stood his ground.

In the mean time, at the other extremity of this human sea, in the midst of the crushing crowd, another man was forcing a passage, with a perseverance almost amounting to ferocity. Nothing impeded his indefatigable exertions,—neither the blows of those he left behind, the fearful imprecations of those he almost stifled in passing, nor the wails of the women, for there were many females in this crowd.

To blows he responded with blows; to imprecations, by a look before which the most courageous quailed; to complaints, by a carelessness bordering on disdain.

At last he arrived behind the powerful young man who, so to speak, closed the entrance to the hall. In the midst of the general expectation—for all were anxious

to see how the contest between two such rude antagonists would terminate — he essayed his peculiar method, which consisted in planting like wedges his elbows between two spectators, and thus breaking through the thickest of the crowd.

He was, notwithstanding, a short young man, whose wan face and emaciated appearance betokened latent illness.

His elbows had scarcely touched the young man before him, when he, indignant at the aggression, turned sharply round, at the same moment raising his clinched fist, which threatened, in falling, to crush the slender form of the intruder.

The two antagonists now found themselves face to face, when a cry of recognition escaped from each.

"Ah, Citizen Maurice," said the delicate young man, with an accent of inexpressible anguish, "permit me to pass; only let me see her, I entreat you; you may kill me afterward."

Maurice — for it was indeed he — felt himself affected by admiration and compassion for this ceaseless devotion, this adventurous daring.

"You here!" murmured he. "How imprudent!"

"Yes; but I am exhausted — O God! she speaks. Let me see her; let me hear her!"

Maurice drew aside, and the young man passed before him, and being at the head of the crowd there was nothing now to intercept the view of him who had undergone so many blows, so much buffeting, to attain his end.

All this scene, and the murmurs it occasioned, aroused the curiosity of the judges.

The accused also turned round, and immediately perceived and recognized the Chevalier.

A shudder ran through the queen's frame, seated in the iron arm-chair. The examination, conducted by the President Harmand, interpreted by Fouquier Tinville, discussed by Chauveau Lagarde, the counsel for the queen, lasted as long as the strength of the judges and the accused permitted.

During all this time Maurice remained motionless in his place, while several times already the concourse was renewed both in the hall and the corridors.

The Chevalier leaned against a pillar. He was no less pale than the marble that supported him.

The day was succeeded by a dark night; some lighted candles on the tables of the jurors, and some smoky lamps on the walls of the hall threw a red and sinister expression on the noble face of that woman who had been the cynosure of all eyes at the splendid fêtes at Versailles.

She was alone there, replying in brief and dignified language to the questions of the president, and occasionally addressing some words to her counsel in a low voice.

Her white and polished forehead retained all its wonted haughtiness. She was attired in a black dress, which she had worn ever since her husband's death.

The judges retired from the hall. The sitting had terminated.

"Have I evinced too much contempt for them, sir?" said she, addressing herself to Chauveau Lagarde.

"Ah, Madame," replied he, "you are always right when you act like yourself."

"How proud she is!" cried a woman among the audience, as if a voice from the people had replied to the question of the unfortunate queen to her advocate.

The queen turned and looked at her.

"Yes," repeated the woman, "you are proud, Antoinette; and I tell you, pride has been the ruin of you."

The queen blushed. The Chevalier turned toward the female who had uttered these words, and replied softly, "She was queen."

Maurice seized him by the wrist, saying, in a low tone, "Take care; do not forget yourself!"

"Oh, Monsieur Maurice!" replied the Chevalier, "you are a man yourself, and you know you are speaking to a man. Tell me, oh, tell me! do you think they will condemn her?"

"I do not think it," said Maurice; "I am sure of it."

"What! a woman!" said the Chevalier, with a deep groan.

"No, a queen," said Maurice; "you have yourself said so."

The Chevalier in his turn seized Maurice by the wrist, and with a force of which he appeared incapable compelled him to bend his ear. It was half-past three in the morning. Many vacuums were visible among the spectators; and a few lights burning here and there served only to render darkness visible. In one of the most obscure parts of the hall were the Chevalier and Maurice, the latter listening to what the former was telling him.

"Why are you here? What brings you here?" demanded the Chevalier; "you, sir, who have not a tiger's heart?"

"Alas!" said Maurice, "to discover what has become of an unfortunate woman."

"Yes, yes," said Maison-Rouge; "she whom her husband forced into the queen's cell? The female who was arrested before my eyes?"

"Geneviève?"

"Yes, Geneviève."

"Then Geneviève is a prisoner, sacrificed by her husband, killed by Dixmer? Oh, I comprehend all; I understand all now! Chevalier, tell me all that has occurred; tell me where she is; tell me where I can find her! Chevalier, this woman constitutes my life; do you hear me?"

"I witnessed all. I was there when she was arrested. I was there also to effect the escape of the queen; but our different projects not having been communicated to each other, injured instead of assisting our mutual cause."

"Why did you not save her, at least. — your sister, Geneviève?"

"How could I when an iron bar divided us? Oh, if you had only been there, if you had united your efforts with mine, the bar must have yielded, and both might have been saved!"

"Geneviève! Geneviève!" murmured Maurice. Then regarding Maison-Rouge with an indefinable expression of hatred and rage, —

"And Dixmer, where is he?" demanded he.

"I know not; he saved himself, as I did also."

"Oh!" said Maurice, grinding his teeth, "if ever I meet him —"

"Yes; I understand. But there is nothing yet to despair about concerning Geneviève," said Maison-Rouge; "her case is not yet desperate; but the queen — Oh! stop, Maurice, you are a man of feeling, an influential man; you have friends — Oh! I pray to you as I would pray to my God — Maurice, help me to save the queen! Maurice, Geneviève supplicates you through me!"

"Pronounce not that name, sir! Who knows but that, like Dixmer, you may have sacrificed this unhappy woman?"

"Sir," replied the Chevalier, haughtily, "when I at-

tach myself to a cause, I know better than to sacrifice any one but myself."

Maurice was about to reply, when the door of the chamber of debate opened.

"Silence, sir! silence!" said the Chevalier, "the judges are returning," and Maurice felt the hand tremble which Maison-Rouge had placed upon his arm. "Ah!" murmured the Chevalier, "my heart fails me now!"

"Have courage and constrain yourself, or you are lost!" said Maurice.

The Tribunal re-entered; and the news of its return spread rapidly through the corridors and galleries. The crowd again congregated in the hall, and even the dim lights appeared to burn brighter at this solemn and decisive moment. The queen rose and stood erect, haughty and immovable, her eyes fixed, her lips closed. The decree was then read which doomed the queen to death. She heard her sentence without even turning pale or uttering a sigh; her countenance evinced not the slightest emotion. Then turning toward the Chevalier, she regarded him with a long and eloquent look, as if to indicate her gratitude to this man whom she had ever seen a living statue of devotion, and supported on the arm of the officer of the gendarmes who commanded the forces, with a calm and dignified demeanor she quitted the court.

Maurice drew a deep sigh. "Thank God!" said he, "nothing in this declaration can compromise Geneviève; there is yet hope."

"Thank God!" murmured the Chevalier on his side, "it is all finished, and the struggle at length terminated. I have not strength to go further."

"Courage, sir!" said Maurice, in a low voice.

"I will take courage, sir," replied the Chevalier; and

having shaken hands, they disappeared by different outlets. The queen was reconducted to the Conciergerie; the large clock struck four as she entered. At the end of Pont Neuf, Maurice was stopped by Lorin.

"Halt!" said he; "you do not pass here!"

"Why?"

"First, where are you going?"

"I am going home. I can return there now, since I know what has become of her."

"So much the better; but you must not enter there."

"For what reason?"

"The reason is, that two hours ago the gendarmes went there to arrest you."

"Ah!" cried Maurice. "Well, that is the greater reason why I should go!"

"Are you mad? And Geneviève?"

"You are right. But where are we to go?"

"Zounds! To my house."

"But I shall ruin you!"

"The more reason, then, that you should come," said Lorin, dragging Maurice away with him.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE PRIEST AND THE EXECUTIONER.

On leaving the court, the queen had been conducted back to the Conciergerie. On reaching her chamber she had taken a pair of scissors, and cut off her long and beautiful ringlets, rendered still more so from the absence of powder, which she had not used for a year; she enclosed them in a packet, on which was inscribed, "For my son and daughter." She then seated herself, or rather sank into a chair, and worn out with fatigue, the trial having lasted eighteen hours, she fell asleep. At seven o'clock the noise of the opening screen roused her suddenly, and turning round, she beheld a man perfectly unknown to her.

"What do you want?" demanded she.

He approached and saluted her as respectfully as if she had not been the queen.

"I am called Sanson," said he.

The name was sufficient. The queen slightly shuddered and rose up.

"You are here early, sir; could you not have made it rather later?"

"No, Madame," replied Sanson; "I received orders to come."

As he uttered these words, he advanced still nearer to the queen. At this moment everything about this man was expressive and terrible.

"I understand," said the prisoner; "you wish to cut off my hair?"

"It is necessary, Madame," replied the executioner.

"I knew it, sir; and I wished to spare you the trouble. My hair is on the table."

Sanson followed the direction of the queen's hand.

"Only," said she, "I should like my hair sent to my children to-night."

"Madame," said Sanson, "this does not concern me."

"However, I thought — notwithstanding — "

"Oh, I get nothing, replied the executioner; "the clothes, the jewels — unless formally made over to me — all go to La Salpêtrière, and are allotted to the poor of the hospital. The Committee of Public Safety has so arranged these things."

"But, sir," persisted Marie Antoinette, "may I at least depend upon this packet being forwarded to my children?"

Sanson remained silent.

"I will endeavor to send it," said Gilbert.

The prisoner cast upon him a look of deep gratitude.

"I came," said Sanson, "to cut off your hair; but since you have done so, I can, if you wish it, leave you for a moment alone."

"I entreat you to do so, sir. I wish to collect my scattered thoughts, and offer up a prayer."

Sanson bowed and retired, when the queen once more found herself in solitude. While the condemned knelt on a low chair which served her as a *prie-dieu*, a scene no less terrible was passing in the parsonage of the small church of Saint Landry, in the city. The curé had just got up; the old housekeeper had prepared the humble morning meal, when a loud summons at the gate was heard. Even in our day, an unexpected visit to a clergyman is in general the precursor of some serious event, —

either a baptism, a marriage "in extremis," or a last confession; but at this epoch the visit of a stranger announced some matter of far graver import. Indeed, at this period the priest was no longer the mandatary of God, but rendered his account to man.

However, the Abbé Girard was of the number of those who had least cause for fear, as he had sworn to abide by the Constitution, — in him conscience and probity had spoken louder than either self-love or religious spirit. No doubt the Abbé Girard admitted the possibility of improvement in the government, and much regretted the abuses committed under the name of the Divine will, and had, while retaining his God, accepted the fraternity of the Republican régime.

"Go and see, Dame Jacinthe," said he, "who disturbs us at this early hour; and if the business is of no very pressing nature, say that this morning I have been sent for to the Conciergerie, and must go there directly."

Dame Jacinthe, formerly called Madeleine, had accepted this flowery appellation in lieu of her own, as the Abbé Girard had taken the title of citizen instead of that of curé. At the suggestion of her master, Jacinthe hastened down the steps of the little garden leading to the entrance gate. She drew back the bolts, when a thin, pale young man, much agitated, but with a frank and amiable expression, presented himself before her.

"Monsieur l' Abbé Girard?" said he.

Jacinthe, not slow to remark the disordered dress, the neglected beard, and the nervous tremor of the newcomer, augured unfavorably of him.

"Citizen," said she; "there is here neither 'Monsieur' nor 'abbé.'"

"Pardon me, Madame," replied the young man; "I meant to say the Curé of Saint Landry."

Jacinthe, notwithstanding her patriotism, was struck by the title "Madame," with which the Republicans would not have honored an empress. She, however, replied, —

"You cannot see him now; he is repeating his breviary."

"In that case I will wait," replied the young man.

"But," said Jacinthe, in whom this obstinate persistence revived her first unfavorable impression, "you will wait in vain; for he has been summoned to the Conciergerie, and must go there immediately."

The young man turned frightfully pale, or rather from pale to livid.

"It is then true!" murmured he; then raising his voice, "This, Madame, is the business which brings me to the Citizen Girard."

And in spite of the old woman he had, while speaking, effected an entrance; then coolly but firmly closing the bolts, and notwithstanding the expostulations and even menaces of Dame Jacinthe, he not only entered the house, but also the chamber of the curé, who on perceiving him uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Forgive me, Monsieur le Curé," immediately said the young man; "I wish to speak to you on a very serious subject; permit us to be alone."

The aged priest had experienced deep sorrow, and knew what it was to endure. He discerned deep and devouring passion in the confusion of the young man, and intense emotion in his fevered tones.

"Leave us, Dame Jacinthe!" said he.

The visitor impatiently followed with his eyes the receding steps of the housekeeper, who, from being accustomed to the confidence of her master, hesitated to comply; then when at length the door was closed,

"Monsieur le Curé," said the unknown, "you will first wish to know who I am. I will tell you. I am a proscribed man, doomed to death, who only at this moment lives from the power of audacity; I am the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

The abbé started in horror from his arm-chair.

"Fear nothing!" said the Chevalier, "no one has seen me enter here; and even those who might have seen me would never know me. I have altered much these last two months."

"But what do you wish, Citizen?" asked the curé.

"You are going this morning to the Conciergerie, are you not?"

"Yes; the porter has sent for me."

"Do you know why?"

"To perform the duties of my sacred office to an invalid, or some dying person, perhaps even to one condemned."

"You are right; it is to one condemned."

The old priest regarded the Chevalier with undisguised astonishment.

"But do you know who this person is?" demanded Maison-Rouge.

"No, I do not know."

"This person is the queen!"

The abbé uttered an exclamation of grief.

"The queen! Oh, my God!"

"Yes, sir; the queen! I made inquiry as to the priest who would attend her, and learned it was you. I therefore came directly to seek an interview."

"But what do you require of me?" asked the priest, alarmed at the wild accents of the Chevalier.

"I wish — I wish nothing, sir. I implore, I entreat, I supplicate you!"

"For what, then?"

"To allow me to enter with you into the presence of her Majesty?"

"You are mad!" exclaimed the curé; "you would not only ruin me, but would sacrifice yourself."

"Fear nothing."

"The poor woman is condemned, and that is the end of her."

"I know it, and it is not to make any attempt to save her that I wish to see her; it is — But listen to me, my father; you are not listening."

"I do not listen to you, since what you ask is impossible; I do not listen to you, since you act like a man bereft of his senses," said the aged man. "I do not listen to you, because you terrify me."

"Father, reassure yourself," said the young man, endeavoring to calm himself; "believe me, Father, I am in my senses. The queen, I know, is lost; but if I could only for an instant prostrate myself at her feet, it would save my life. If I do not see her I shall kill myself; and as you will have caused my despair, you will at the same moment destroy both body and soul."

"My son! my son!" replied the priest, "you ask me to sacrifice my life for you! Old as I am, my existence is still necessary to the unfortunate; old as I am, to precipitate my own death is to commit suicide."

"Do not refuse me, Father," replied the Chevalier; "you must have a curate, an acolyte; take me, let me go with you."

The priest tried to maintain his firmness, which was beginning to give way.

"No, no!" said he; "this would be a dereliction of duty; I have sworn to the Constitution, and I am bound heart, soul, and conscience. The unhappy woman con-

demned to death is a guilty queen. I would accept death, if by so doing I could benefit a fellow-creature; but I will not depart from the path of duty."

"But," cried the Chevalier, "when I tell you, and again repeat, even swear to you, I do not want to save the queen; here by the Gospel, by the crucifix, I swear I do not go to the Conciergerie to prevent her death!"

"What is your motive, then?" said the old man, affected by such undisguised accents of despair.

"Hearken!" said the Chevalier, whose soul seemed to speak from his lips; "she was my benefactress; she is attached to me; to see me in her last moments will I feel sure prove a consolation to her."

"And this is all that you desire?" demanded the curé, yielding to these irresistible accents.

"Absolutely all."

"And you have woven no plot to attempt to rescue the condemned?"

"None. I am a Christian, Father; and if there rests in my heart a shadow of deceit; if I entertain any hope of her life, or try in any way to save it, — may God visit me with eternal damnation!"

"No, no!" said the curé; "I can promise nothing," as the innumerable dangers attendant on an act so imprudent returned to his mind.

"Now listen to me, Father!" said the Chevalier, in a voice hoarse with emotion; "I have spoken like a submissive child; I have not uttered one bitter word or uncharitable sentiment; no menace has escaped my lips. Yet now my head whirls; fever burns in my veins; now despair gnaws my heart; now I am armed. Behold! here is my dagger." And the young man drew from his bosom a polished blade which threw a livid reflection on his trembling hand. The curé drew back quickly.

"Fear nothing," said the Chevalier, with a mournful smile; "others, knowing you to be so strict an observer of your word, would have terrified you into an oath. But no! I have supplicated, and I still continue to supplicate, with hands clasped, my forehead in the dust, that I may see her for a single moment. Look! here is your guarantee!" And he drew from his pocket a billet which he presented to Girard, who opened it and read as follows: —

I, René, Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, declare by God and my honor, that I have by threats of death compelled the worthy curé of Saint Landry to convey me to the Conciergerie, notwithstanding his refusal and great repugnance to do so. In proof of which I have signed —

MAISON-ROUGE.

"It is well," said the priest; "but swear to me once again that you will be guilty of no imprudence. It is not sufficient that my life is saved, I am answerable also for yours."

"Think not of that," said the Chevalier. "Then you consent?"

"I must, since you so absolutely insist. You can wait outside, and when she comes to the wicket you will see her."

The Chevalier seized the hand of the old priest and kissed it with all the ardor and respect he would have kissed the crucifix.

"Oh!" murmured the Chevalier, "she shall die at least like a queen, and the hand of the executioner shall never touch her!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE CART.

Immediately after having obtained this permission from the curé of Saint Laudry, Maison-Rouge withdrew into a cabinet, the door of which, being half opened, he had recognized as the priest's dressing-room. There his long beard and mustachios speedily disappeared under the stroke of the razor; and then only he was fully aware of his frightful pallor and altered appearance. It was terrible to behold. He re-entered perfectly calm, and seemed to have forgotten that notwithstanding the absence of his beard and mustachios, he might still probably be known at the Conciergerie. He followed the abbé, whom, during his momentary absence, two officials were seeking; and with the cool audacity which disarms suspicion, entered the iron gate at this time opening into the court of the Palace. He was, like the Abbé Girard, dressed in black, — sacerdotal habits at that period being abolished.

In the register-office they found about fifty persons assembled; some employed about the prison, some deputies, some commissaries, all waiting in the expectation of seeing the queen pass; there might be some mandataries and many idlers. Maison-Rouge's heart beat so violently when he found himself opposite the wicket that he heard not even the parley that ensued between the abbé, the gendarmes, and the porter. Only a man with a pair of scissors in his hand and a piece of stuff newly cut pushed against Maison-Rouge upon the threshold. He turned round and recognized the executioner.

"What do you want, Citizen?" demanded Sanson.

The Chevalier endeavored to repress the shudder which, in spite of himself, ran through his veins.

"You see, Citizen Sanson," replied the Chevalier, "that I accompany the curé of Saint Landry."

"Oh, very well!" said the executioner, drawing himself on one side, and giving orders to his assistant.

During this time Maison-Rouge had passed into the interior of the office, and from there into the compartment inhabited by the two gendarmes.

These men were overcome by contending emotions. Proud and haughty as she had been to others, she had ever been gentle and condescending to them. They seemed more like her servants than her guards.

In his present position the Chevalier could not obtain a view of the queen, — the screen was closed. It had been opened to give entrance to the curé, but directly closed behind him. When the Chevalier entered, the conversation had already commenced.

"Sir," said the queen, in a clear and firm voice, "since you have sworn allegiance to the Republic — in whose name they have condemned me to death — I have no confidence in you. We do not even worship the same God!"

"Madame," said Girard, struck by this disdainful profession of faith, "a Christian about to die should dismiss all hatred from her heart, and ought not to repulse her God, under whatever form he may be presented to her."

Maison-Rouge advanced a step to open the screen, hoping that when she saw him, and knew what brought him, she would change her opinion in regard to the curé; but the gendarmes detected the movement.

"But," said Maison-Rouge, "I am the acolyte of the curé — "

"Then, since she refuses the curé," said Duchesne, "she does not require you."

"But still, perhaps she may accept me," said he, raising his voice; "it is impossible she would refuse me." But Marie Antoinette was too much engrossed by the sentiment which agitated her either to hear or recognize the Chevalier's voice.

"Go, sir!" continued she; "leave me!" addressing Girard; "since at this time we in France live under the régime of liberty, I claim the right to die according to my own fashion."

Girard offered some resistance.

"Leave me, sir!" said she. "I desire you to leave me."

Girard endeavored to speak.

"I will not hear you; leave me!" said she, with the gesture of Marie Thérèse.

Girard went out.

Maison-Rouge essayed to gain a glimpse of her through the opening in the screen; but the prisoner had turned her back. The executioner's assistant crossed before the curé; he came in holding a cord in his hand. The two gendarmes pushed the Chevalier toward the door; amazed, despairing, and utterly bewildered, before he had been able to utter a cry or make the slightest movement to effect his purpose, he found himself with the curé in the corridor of the turnkey. This corridor brought them again into the register-office, where the news of the queen's refusal had already circulated, and where the Austrian pride of Marie Antoinette was to some the pretext of the coarsest invectives, and to others the subject of secret admiration.

"Go!" said Richard to the abbé, "return home, since she repulses you, and let her die as she likes."

"Well, she is in the right," said Richard's wife, "and I would act in the same way."

"Then you would do wrong, Madame," said the curé.

"Be silent," said the keeper, opening his eyes very wide; "what does it concern you? Go, Abbé, go!"

"No," said Girard, "no; I will, notwithstanding all, accompany her; one word, only one word, if she will listen, might bring her back to duty; besides, I am sent by the order of the Commune, and I must discharge my office."

"Send back your sexton, then," brutally observed the adjutant-major, commandant of the armed forces. He was a former actor at the Comédie Française, named Grammont. The eyes of the Chevalier flashed lightning, as he mechanically thrust his hand into his breast, where Girard knew he had the poniard. He checked him with a suppliant look.

"Spare my life," said he, in a low voice; "you see that your cause is ruined; do not destroy yourself with her. I will mention you to her on the route; I swear to you I will tell her you risked your life that you might see her once more on earth."

These words calmed the effervescence of the young man, and the ordinary reaction taking place, he sank into a state of quiescence. This man of heroic mind, of marvellous power, had arrived at the termination of both strength and will, and glided irresolute, or rather exhausted and vanquished, into a state of torpor that might have been imagined to be the precursor of death.

"Yes, I believe," said he, "it should be thus: the cross for Jesus, the scaffold for her, — gods and kings drink deep of the chalice presented to them by men." This thought produced resignation; and now, totally prostrated, he allowed himself to be pushed without offering

any resistance, except an occasional involuntary groan, to the outer gate, passive as Ophelia when, devoted to death, she found herself borne away by the remorseless waves.

At the bottom of the gates and at the doors of the Conciergerie, a crowd was assembled, which unless once seen it was impossible to describe. Impatience ruled every passion; and each passion spoke its own language; and these combined formed an immense and prolonged uproar, as if the whole noise and the entire population of Paris were on this occasion concentrated in the quarter of the Palais de Justice.

In front of this crowd the whole army was encamped, with guns intended to guard the procession, and also to secure the privilege of those who came to witness the last act of the tragedy.

It would have been vain to attempt to pierce this deep rampart, increasing gradually, since the condemnation of the queen was now known not only at Paris, but by the patriots of the faubourgs.

Maison-Rouge, expelled from the Conciergerie, naturally found himself in the first rank among the soldiers, who instantly demanded who he was. He replied, "he was the vicar of the Abbé Girard, but having bound himself by the same oath, he, like the curé, had been dismissed and refused by the queen;" on which the soldiers, in their turn, pushed him into the first row of spectators, where he was again compelled to repeat what he had previously told them.

Then the cry arose, "He has just left!" "He has seen her!" "What did she say?" "What did she do?" "Is she as haughty as usual?" "Is she cast down?" "Does she weep?" The Chevalier replied to all these questions in a feeble but sweet and affable tone; as if this

voice was the last manifestation of life suspended on his lips. His answer was couched in the language of truth and simplicity. It contained an eulogium on the firmness of Marie Antoinette; and that which he recounted with the simplicity and faith of an evangelist cast sorrow and remorse over many hearts.

When he spoke of the little dauphin, and of Madame Royale; of this queen without a throne; of this wife without a husband; this mother bereft of her children; this woman alone and abandoned, without a friend, surrounded by executioners, — more than one face here and there assumed a sad expression, and more than one tear of regret was clandestinely wiped from eyes a moment before animated by hatred.

The Palace clock struck eleven. All murmuring at this moment ceased. One hundred thousand human beings counted these strokes, echoed by the pulsations of their own hearts.

When the last vibration had ceased and died away in the distance, a loud noise was heard within the gates, and at the same time a cart, advancing from the side of the Quai aux Fleurs, broke through the crowd, then the guards, and drew up at the bottom of the steps.

The queen soon appeared at the top of the staircase. Looks expressive of all kinds of passion were bent upon her; the mob stood in breathless expectation. The queen's hair was cut short; the greater portion had turned gray during her captivity, and this shade of silver rendered still more delicate the mother-of-pearl pallor which at this moment lent an almost angelic beauty to this daughter of the Cæsars. She was attired in a white robe, and her hands were fastened behind her back. When she appeared with the Abbé Girard on her right, who notwithstanding all opposition would still accompany her

and the executioner on her left, both dressed in black, there ran throughout the crowd a murmur, of which God alone, who reads all hearts, could comprehend and sum up the truth.

A man passed between the executioner and Marie Antoinette; it was Grammont. He conducted her to the fatal car. The queen recoiled.

"Mount!" cried Grammont.

This word was distinctly heard by all. Emotion held every breath suspended on the lips of the spectators. A blush suffused the face of the queen, mounting even to the roots of her hair, but it immediately disappeared, and her face resumed its former death-like hue.

"Why a car for me," said she, "when the king had a carriage to convey him to the scaffold?"

The Abbé Girard advanced, and addressed a few words to her in a low tone; doubtless he condemned this last utterance of royal pride. The queen remained silent, but tottered so much that Sanson held out his arms to support her; but she recovered her self-possession before he could touch her. She then descended the staircase, while the assistants placed a foot-board behind the car. The queen entered first; the abbé followed her.

When the car was in motion it caused a great movement in the assemblage; and the soldiers at the same time, ignorant of its cause, united their efforts to push back the crowd, and consequently, a large space was cleared between the people and the vehicle of death, when suddenly a mournful howling was heard. The queen started, and instantly rose, looking around her. She then saw her little dog, which had been lost for two months, and which, unable to follow her into the Conciergerie, regardless of kicks, blows, and thrusts, now rushed toward the car; but almost directly poor Jet, emaciated,

starving, and bruised, disappeared under the horses' feet. The queen followed him with her eyes; she could not speak, for her voice was drowned in the noise; she could not point her finger toward him, for her hands were tied; and had she been able to do either, who would have regarded her? Having closed her eyes for an instant, she soon revived. He was in the arms of a pale young man, who, standing on a cannon, was conspicuous above the crowd, and whose natural stature seemed enlarged from the unspeakable elevation of the sentiments with which he was animated, while he saluted the queen and pointed to heaven. Marie Antoinette looked upward and smiled sweetly.

The Chevalier uttered a groan, as if this smile had broken his heart; and as the fatal car turned toward the Pont-au-Change, he fell back among the crowd, and disappeared.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE SCAFFOLD.

Upon the Place de la Revolution, leaning against a lamp-post, two men were waiting. Of those who followed with the crowd, some were carried to the Place du Palais, others to the Place de la Revolution, while the rest spread, impatient and tumultuous, over the whole road separating the two places. They were waiting until the queen should reach the instrument of punishment, which, defaced by the sun and storm, worn by the hand of the executioner, and, most horrible! blunted by too frequent contact with its victims, reared its head with a sinister pride over the subjacent mass, like a queen ruling her people. The two men, arm-in-arm, and speaking by fits and starts, with pale lips and contracted brows, were Lorin and Maurice. Lost in the crowd, but not in a way calculated to excite suspicion, they continued in a low tone their conversation, which was perhaps not the least interesting one then circulating among the various groups which, like an electric chain, a living sea, was agitated from the Pont-au-Change to the Pont de la Revolution.

The idea we have expressed regarding the scaffold seemed to have struck them both.

"See," said Maurice, "how the hideous monster rears her red arms; might it not be said that she calls us, and grins at us through her wicket as if it was her horrid mouth?"

"I," said Lorin, "must confess I do not belong to the school of poetry which sees everything blood-color. I see

everything *couleur-de-rose*, and even at the foot of that dreadful machine I should sing and hope still. '*Dum spiro spero.*' "

"You hope when they murder women?"

"Maurice," said Lorin, "child of the Revolution, do not deny your mother! Ah! Maurice, remain a stanch and loyal patriot. She who is condemned to die is unlike all other women; she is the evil genius of France."

"Oh, it is not she that I regret; it is not for her I weep!" cried Maurice.

"Yes; I understand, it is Geneviève."

"Ah!" said Maurice, "there is one thought that drives me mad! It is that Geneviève is in the hands of those purveyors to the guillotine, Hébert and Fouquier Tinville, — in the hands of the men who sent here the poor Héloïse, and are now sending the proud Marie Antoinette."

"Well!" said Lorin, "it is this very fact that inspires me with hope. When the rage of the people has feasted on two tyrants it will be satiated for some time at least, — like the boa-constrictor, which requires three months to digest what he has devoured. Then the popular rage will swallow no more; and as is said by the prophets of the faubourg, 'the lesser morsels will be no longer palatable.'"

"Lorin! Lorin!" said Maurice, "I am more positive than you, and I say it in a whisper, but am ready to repeat it aloud, — Lorin, I hate the new queen who seems destined to succeed the Austrian, whom she destroys. It is a sad queen whose purple is daily dyed in blood, and to whom Sanson is prime minister."

"Bah! we shall escape her."

"I do not think so," said Maurice, shaking his head; "to avoid being arrested at your house we have no resource but to live in the street."

"Bah! we can quit Paris; there is nothing to prevent us. We need not complain. My uncle will await us at Saint Omer; money, passport, nothing will be wanting. There exists not the gendarme who shall arrest us; what do you think? We remain in Paris because we choose to do so."

"No; that is not correct, excellent friend, devoted and faithful as you are — You remain because I wish to continue here."

"And you wish to remain to discover Geneviève. Well! nothing is more simple, just, or natural. You think she is in prison; nothing more probable. You wish to keep watch over her, and on that account we cannot quit Paris."

Maurice drew a deep sigh; it was evident his thoughts were wandering.

"Do you remember the death of Louis XVI?" said he. "I can see him yet, pale with pride and emotion. I was then one of the chiefs of this crowd, in whose folds I conceal myself to-day. I was greater at the foot of the scaffold than the king upon it had ever been. What a change, Lorin! and when one thinks that nine short months have sufficed to work this change!"

"Nine months of love, Maurice — Love ruined Troy!"

Maurice sighed; his wandering thoughts now took another direction.

"Poor Maison-Rouge," said he; "this is a sad day for him!"

"Alas!" said Lorin, "shall I tell you what appears to me the most melancholy thing about revolutions?"

"Yes," said Maurice.

"It is that one often has for friends those we should prefer as enemies; and for enemies those we would wish —"

"There is one thing I can hardly believe," interrupted Maurice.

"What?"

"It is that he will not invent some project, though the most hopeless, to save the queen."

"What! one man stronger than a hundred thousand!"

"I said, 'though the most hopeless.' I know that to save Geneviève —" Lorin frowned.

"I again tell you, Maurice," said he, "you are wild! No; even were it possible for you to save Geneviève, you would not become a bad citizen. But enough of this, Maurice; they are listening to us. Look how the heads undulate; see! there is Sanson's valet raising himself from under his basket, and looking in the distance. The Austrian arrives."

In short, as if to accompany this undulation which Lorin had remarked, a shuddering, prolonged and increasing, pervaded the crowd. It was one of those hurricanes which commence with a whistle and terminate with a bellow. Maurice raised himself by the help of the lamp-post, and looked toward the Rue Saint Honoré.

"Yes," said he shuddering; "there she is." And another machine now made its appearance, almost as revolting as the guillotine. It was the fatal car.

On the right and left glittered the arms of the escort; while in front marched Grammont, replying with flashes of his sabre to the shouts and cries of some fanatics. But ever as the cart advanced these cries subsided under the haughty courage of the condemned.

Never had a countenance commanded more respect; never had Marie Antoinette looked more the queen. Her proud courage struck terror into those around her.

Indifferent to the exhortations of the Abbé Girard, who despite of her opposition accompanied her, her face

moved neither to the right nor left; her deep thought was as immutable as her look; even the jolting motion of the cart upon the uneven pavement did not by its violence disturb the rigidity of her demeanor. She might have been taken for a marble statue conveyed in the car, had it not been for her brilliant eyes, and her hair waving in the wind.

A silence equal to that of the desert fell suddenly upon the three hundred thousand spectators of this scene, witnessed by the heavens for the first time by the light of the sun.

In the place where Maurice and Lorin were standing they heard the creaking of the axles and the snorting of the horses.

The car stopped at the foot of the scaffold.

The queen, who doubtless was not thinking of this moment, recalled herself, and understood it all; she threw a haughty glance upon the crowd, and again beheld the pale young man she had previously seen standing on the cannon. He was now mounted on a wall, and repeated the respectful salutation he had before offered her as she left the Conciergerie. He then disappeared. Many persons seeing him, it was soon reported, from his being dressed in black, that a priest was in attendance on Marie Antoinette, to give her absolution ere she ascended the scaffold.

Further than that no one disturbed the Chevalier. In moments of highest concern, certain things are treated with marked deference.

The queen cautiously descended the steps from the car, supported by Sanson, who to the last moment, in accomplishing the task to which he himself appeared to be condemned, treated her with the greatest respect.

As the queen walked toward the steps of the scaffold

The little spaniel turned toward the corpse, terrified and howling lamentably.

"Why, there is Jet," said a man, holding a large club in his hand, — "why, there is Jet; come here, old fellow."

The dog advanced toward him, but was scarcely within arm's length of the man who had called him, when the brutal wretch raised his club and dashed out his brains, at the same time bursting into a hoarse laugh.

"Cowardly wretch!" cried Maurice.

"Silence!" whispered Lorin, "or we are lost. It is Simon."

CHAPTER L.

THE VISIT TO THE DOMICILE.

Lorin and Maurice returned to their home; but the latter, in order not to compromise his friend too openly, usually absented himself during the day, and returned at night.

In the midst of these events, being present at the removal of the prisoners to the Conciergerie, he watched daily for the sight of Geneviève, not having been yet able to discover her place of imprisonment. Lorin, since his visit to Fouquier Tinville, had succeeded in convincing Maurice that on the first ostensible act he was lost, and would then have sacrificed himself without having benefited Geneviève; and Maurice, who would willingly have thrown himself into prison in the hope of being united to his mistress, became prudent from the fear of being separated from her forever.

He went every morning from the Carmelites to Port Libre, from the Madelonnettes to Saint Lazare, from La Force to the Luxembourg; he stationed himself before the prisons to watch the cars as they came out to convey the accused to the Revolutionary Tribunal. Then when he had scanned the victims, he proceeded to the other prisons to prosecute this hopeless search, for he soon became aware that the activity of ten men would prove inadequate to keep watch over the thirty-three prisons which Paris could boast of at this period. He therefore contented himself by going daily to the Tribunal, there to await the appearance of Geneviève.

He was already beginning to despair. Indeed, what hope was there for a person arrested and condemned? Sometimes the Tribunal, whose sittings commenced at ten o'clock, had condemned twenty or thirty people by four o'clock: those first condemned had six hours to live, but the last, sentenced at a quarter to four, fell at half-past beneath the axe. To resign himself to such a fate for Geneviève, would be to grow weary in his battle against destiny.

Oh, if he had known beforehand of the imprisonment of Geneviève, how Maurice would have baffled the blind, human justice of this epoch; how easily and promptly would he have torn Geneviève from prison! Never were escapes more easy; and it may be said, never were they so rare. All the nobles, once placed in prison, installed themselves there as in a château, and died at leisure. To fly was like evading a duel; the women even blushed at liberty acquired at this price.

But Maurice would not have shown himself so scrupulous. To kill the dogs, to bribe a door-keeper, what more simple? Geneviève was not one of those splendid names calculated to attract general attention. She would not dishonor herself by flying, and besides — when could she be disgraced!

Oh, how bitterly he thought of the gardens of Port Libre, so easy to scale; the chambers of Madelonnettes, so easy of access to the street; the low walls of the Luxembourg, and the dark corridors of the Carmelites, where a resolute man could so easily penetrate by opening a window.

But was Geneviève in one of these prisons?

Then, devoured by doubt, and worn out with anxiety, he loaded Dixmer with imprecations; he threatened, and nourished his hatred against this man, whose cowardly

vengeance concealed itself under an apparent devotion to the royal cause.

"I shall find him out too," thought Maurice; "for if he wishes to save the unhappy woman, he will show himself; if he wishes to ruin her, he will insult her. I shall find him out, the scoundrel! and it will be an evil day for him!"

On the morning of the day when the events occurred which we are about to relate, Maurice went out early to take his usual station at the Revolutionary Tribunal, leaving Lorin asleep.

Lorin was suddenly awakened by a loud noise at the door, the voices of women and the butt-ends of guns. He threw around him the startled glance of a surprised man who wished to convince himself that nothing that could compromise him was in view. Four sectionaries, two gendarmes, and a commissary entered at the same moment. This visit was sufficiently significant, and Lorin hastened to dress himself.

"Do you come to arrest me?" said he.

"Yes, Citizen Lorin."

"What for?"

"Because you are suspected."

"Ah, all right!"

The commissary scribbled some words at the bottom of the warrant for arrest.

"Where is your friend?" he inquired.

"What friend?"

"The Citizen Maurice Lindey."

"At home, probably."

"No; he lodges here."

"He! go along! Search, and if you find —"

"Here is the denunciation," interrupted the commissary, "it is plain enough;" offering Lorin a paper in

vile writing and enigmatical orthography. It stated that every morning the Citizen Lindey, suspected and ordered for arrest, was seen going out of the Citizen Lorin's house. The denunciation was signed "Simon."

"Why," said Lorin, "the cobbler will lose his custom if he follows two trades at the same time, — a spy and boot-mender. He is a Cæsar, this Monsieur Simon," and he burst into a fit of laughter.

"The Citizen Maurice, where is he?" asked the commissary. "We summon you to deliver him up."

"When I tell you he is not here!"

The commissary passed into the chamber adjoining, then ascended to the loft where Lorin's official slept, and at last opened a lower apartment, but found no trace of Maurice. But upon the dining-room table a recently written letter attracted the attention of the commissary. It was from Maurice, who had deposited it there on leaving in the morning without awakening his friend.

"I go to the Tribunal," said Maurice; "take breakfast without me. I shall not return till night."

"Citizens," said Lorin, "however anxious I may feel to obey your commands, I cannot follow you undressed. Allow my official to assist me."

"Aristocrat," said a voice, "do you require assistance to put on your breeches?"

"Oh, goodness! yes," said Lorin; "I resemble the Citizen Dagobert, — mind, I did not say king."

"Well, dress," said the commissary; "but make haste!"

The official came down to help his master to dress. However, it was not exactly that Lorin required a *valet-de-chambre;* it was that nothing might escape the notice of the official, and that consequently he might detail everything to Maurice.

"Now, gentlemen, — pardon, Citizens. Now, Citizens, I am ready, and will follow you; but permit me, I beg, to carry with me the last volume of 'Lettres à Émilie,' by Monsieur Demoustier, which has just appeared, and I have not read. It will enliven the hours of my captivity."

"Your captivity?" said Simon, sharply, now become municipal in his turn, and entering, followed by four sectionaries, "that will not last long. You figure in the trial of the woman who wanted to assist the Austrian to escape. They try her to-day; and to-morrow, when you have given your testimony, your turn will come."

"Cobbler," said Lorin, "you stitch your soles too quickly."

"Yes; but what a nice stroke from the leather-cutting knife!" replied Simon; "you will see, you will see, my fine grenadier!"

Lorin shrugged his shoulders.

"Well," said he, "let us go; I am waiting for you."

As each one turned round to descend the staircase Lorin bestowed on the municipal Simon so vigorous a kick that he sent him rolling and howling down the entire flight of stairs. The sectionaries could not restrain their laughter. Lorin put his hands in his pockets.

"In the exercise of my functions!" cried Simon, livid with rage.

"Zounds!" said Lorin, "are we not all here in the exercise of our functions?"

He got into the carriage, and was conducted by the commissary to the Palais de Justice.

CHAPTER LI.

LORIN.

If for the second time the reader is willing to follow us to the Revolutionary Tribunal, we shall find Maurice in the same place where we have already seen him, only now infinitely more pale and agitated.

At the moment our scene again opens upon the lugubrious theatre, whither we are led by a tissue of events rather than by our own inclinations, the jury were deliberating; a cause had just been tried. Two of the accused had already, by one of those insolent anticipations by which they ridiculed the judges, attired themselves for the scaffold, and were conversing with their counsel, whose words somewhat resembled those of a physician who despairs of the life of his patient.

The people of the Tribune were this day in a ferocious mood, calculated to excite the severity of the jury placed under the immediate surveillance of the gossips and inhabitants of the suburbs. The juries under these circumstances became more excited and energetic, resembling an actor who redoubles his efforts beneath the eyes of a censorious public.

Since ten in the morning five condemnations had already taken place under the decisions of these harsh and insatiable juries.

The two individuals who now found themselves on the bench of the accused awaited the decisive moment when

"yes" or "no" would return them to life or doom them to death.

The audience, rendered savage by the daily occurrence of these spectacles, now become their favorite pastime, prepared them by exclamations and anticipations for the awful moment.

"There! there! look at the tall one!" said a beldam, who, not having a bonnet, wore a tricolored cockade as large as a hand on her head, — "there! is he not pale? One would swear he was already dead."

The condemned regarded the woman with a contemptuous smile.

"What do you say?" replied her neighbor; "why, he is smiling."

"Yes; on the wrong side of his mouth."

One of the men looked at his watch.

"What is the time?" inquired his companion.

"A quarter to one. This has lasted three quarters of an hour."

"The same as at Domfront, that unfortunate town, where you arrive at noon, and are hung in an hour."

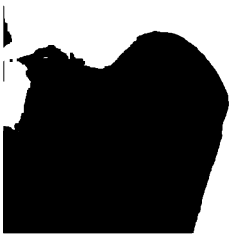
"And the short one! the short one!" cried another person, "will he not be ugly when he sneezes in the sack?"

"Bah! it is done so quickly, you will barely have time to perceive it."

"Then we will demand the head from Sanson; one has a right to see it."

"Look! what a beautiful blue coat he has on. It is rather a pleasant thing that the poor can shorten the rich and well-dressed people."

Indeed, as the executioner had told the queen, the poor inherited the spoils of each victim; they were carried to La Salpêtrière, immediately after the execution, and dis-



tributed among the indigent; and there even the clothes of the unfortunate queen had been conveyed.

Maurice heard this whirlwind of words without paying any attention; for he was at this moment occupied by one engrossing thought, to the exclusion of all else. For several days his heart beat only at certain moments, and by fits and starts, as from time to time hope or fear appeared to suspend all vital action, and these perpetual oscillations to bruise the most tender sensibilities of his soul.

The jury returned to their places; and as had been fully anticipated, the president pronounced the condemnation of the two accused, who were directly removed, walking with a firm step and erect bearing, — for at this epoch every one learned to die boldly.

The solemn and sinister voice of the usher was again heard.

"The public prosecutor against the Citizeness Geneviève Dixmer."

A shudder ran through Maurice's frame, and a cold sweat bedewed his brow. The little door by which the accused entered suddenly opened, and Geneviève appeared. She was dressed in white; her ringlets were tastefully arranged, instead of being cut short, hanging in long masses of clustering curls. Doubtless, to the last moment poor Geneviève wished to appear beautiful to her lover, who might perchance be able to see her.

Maurice beheld Geneviève, and felt that all the strength he had collected was inadequate to this occasion, notwithstanding he had expected this blow, since for twelve days he had not omitted a single sitting, and three times already had the name of Geneviève proceeded from the mouth of the public prosecutor, and reached his ear. But there are certain griefs and miseries so profound

that it is quite impossible to sound the depths of the abyss.

All those who witnessed the appearance of this young female, so lovely, so pale and innocent, uttered a simultaneous cry; some of fury, — for at this period there existed a class of people who detested everything bordering on superiority of beauty, riches, or of birth, — others of admiration, and some of pity. Geneviève, doubtless, among all these cries had recognized one cry, amid all these voices had distinguished one voice, for she turned in the direction of Maurice, while the president, looking up at her from time to time, turned over the law papers of the accused.

At the first glance she discovered Maurice, concealed as his features were under the broad brim of his hat; and turning round with a sweet smile, and a gesture still more engaging, she pressed her rosy but trembling hands upon her lips, and depositing her whole soul with her breath, she gave wings to a last kiss, which only one in this vast crowd had the right to appropriate to himself.

A murmur of interest ran through the hall. Geneviève, recalled, turned toward her judges, but stopping suddenly in the midst of this movement, her eyes dilated, and became fixed with an undefinable expression of horror toward one point of the hall.

Maurice in vain raised himself on his toes; he saw nothing, or rather something of more consequence recalled his attention to the scene that was being enacted, — that is to say, to the Tribunal.

Fouquier Tinville had commenced reading the act of accusation. This act stated that Geneviève Dixmer was the wife of an obstinate conspirator suspected of having assisted the ex-Chevalier de Maison-Rouge in his succes-

sive attempts to rescue the queen. She had, besides, been surprised at the feet of the queen, entreating her to exchange garments with her, and offering to die in her stead. This absurd fanaticism, continued the act, merited, no doubt, the admiration of the counter-revolutionists; but in our day every French citizen owes his life to the nation; it is therefore double treason to sacrifice it to the enemies of France.

Geneviève, when asked if she acknowledged that she had knelt before the queen, as stated by the two gendarmes Gilbert and Duchesne, and had entreated her to exchange vestments, simply replied, "Yes."

"Then," said the president, "inform us of your plan, and what hope you entertained of its success."

Geneviève smiled.

"A woman might conceive hopes," said she, "but a woman could not form a plan like this of which I am the victim."

"How came you there, then?"

"Not of my own accord. I was compelled."

"Who compelled you?" demanded the public prosecutor.

"Those who menaced me with death if I did not obey;" and again the agitated look of the young woman was centred on that part of the hall invisible to Maurice.

"But to escape from this death which menaced you, did you not know that you faced that death which must result from your condemnation?"

"When I consented, the knife was at my throat, while the guillotine was only in perspective. I succumbed under present violence."

"Why did you not call for assistance? All good citizens would have defended you."

"Alas! sir," said Geneviève, in a voice at once so sad

and sweet that it caused Maurice's heart to beat tumultuously, "I had no one near me."

Commiseration succeeded to interest, as interest had succeeded to curiosity. Many heads were lowered, some to conceal their tears, many to allow them to flow freely.

Just then Maurice perceived on his left an immovable head and an inflexible countenance. It was Dixmer, standing dark, gloomy, and implacable, never for a moment losing sight of Geneviève or of the Tribunal.

The blood rushed to the young man's temples; rage mounted from his heart to his forehead, filling his whole being with intense desire for vengeance. He darted at Dixmer a look so replete with burning hate, so condensed and powerful, that he, as if attracted by the electric fluid, turned his head toward his enemy. Their glances encountered like two flashes.

"Tell us the names of your instigators," said the president.

"There was only one, sir."

"Who?"

"My husband."

"Do you know where he is?"

"Yes."

"Inform us of his retreat."

"He has been brutal, but I will not be cowardly. It is not for me to tell you his retreat, but for you to find him."

Maurice looked at Dixmer. He never moved. One idea flashed through the young man's brain. It was to denounce him at the same time that he denounced himself; but he quickly suppressed the thought.

"No," said he; "it is not thus that he should die."

"Then you refuse to assist us in our search?" said the president.

"I think, sir, I could not do so without rendering myself as contemptible in the eyes of others as he is in mine."

"Are there any witnesses?" demanded the president.

"There is one," replied the usher.

"Call the witness."

"Maximilien-Jean Lorin!" shouted the usher.

"Lorin!" cried Maurice, "Oh, my God! what has happened?"

This scene took place the same day that Lorin had been arrested, and Maurice was in utter ignorance of the fact.

"Lorin!" murmured Geneviève, looking round with anxious solicitude.

"Why does not the witness answer to the call?" demanded the president.

"Citizen President," said Fouquier Tinville, "upon a recent denunciation the witness was arrested at his own house; he will be brought directly."

Maurice started.

"There is another still more important witness," continued Fouquier; "but we have not yet been able to find him."

Dixmer turned toward Maurice smiling. Perhaps the same idea flitted through the mind of the husband which had before entered that of the lover.

Geneviève, pale and horror-stricken, uttered a low groan.

At this moment Lorin entered, followed by two gendarmes.

After him, and by the same door, Simon appeared, who came to take his seat in the judgment-hall, according to his custom in that locality.

"Your name and surname?" inquired the president.

"Maximilien-Jean Lorin."

"Your condition in life?"

"Independent."

"You will not remain so long," muttered Simon, shaking his fist at him.

"Are you related to the prisoner at the bar?"

"No; but I have the honor of being one of her friends."

"Are you aware that she conspired to carry off the queen?"

"How could I be aware of it?"

"She might have confided in you?"

"In me! a member of the section of the Thermopyles? A likely story!"

"Notwithstanding, you have sometimes been seen with her."

"I might have been seen with her often."

"Did you know that she was an aristocrat?"

"I knew her as the wife of a master-tanner."

"But her husband did not in reality follow the business which he pretended to."

"Of that I am ignorant; her husband was not one of my friends."

"Tell us what you know of this husband."

"Oh, very willingly. He is a villain, who —"

"Monsieur Lorin," said Geneviève, "for pity's sake!"

Lorin continued unmoved.

"He is a villain, who has sacrificed his wife, the poor woman before you, not so much to his political opinions as to his private hatred. Faugh! I look upon the brute as lower and more degraded even than Simon."

Dixmer became livid with rage. Simon wished to speak, but a gesture from the president imposed silence.

"You appear to know the whole history, Citizen Lorin," said Fouquier; "continue your testimony."

"Pardon me, Citizen Fouquier," said Lorin, rising; "I know nothing more." He bowed and reseated himself.

"Citizen Lorin," said Fouquier, "it is your bounden duty to enlighten this Tribunal."

"It has received all the light that I can give it. As to this poor woman, I repeat she has only acted under compulsion. Look at her! does she look like a conspirator? What she has done she was compelled to do. That is all."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"In the name of the law," said Fouquier, "I require that the witness Lorin shall be placed before this Tribunal as an accomplice of this woman."

Maurice groaned, while Geneviève buried her face in her hands.

Simon screamed out in a transport of joy, "Citizen Prosecutor, you are the savior of your country!"

As to Lorin, he leaped over the balustrade without making any reply, and seating himself near to Geneviève, took her hand, and respectfully kissed it, saying, "Good-day, Madame," with a coolness which electrified the assembly; "how do you do?"

Then he took his seat on the bench of the accused.

CHAPTER LII.

SEQUEL TO THE PRECEDING.

ALL this scene had passed before Maurice like a fantastic vision. Leaning upon the handle of his sword, which he had never quitted, he saw his friends precipitated one after another into that gulf which never yields back its victims; and this fatal sight so affected him that he asked himself why he, the companion of these unfortunates, should still cling to the brink of the precipice, and not surrender himself to the giddiness which was dragging him with them.

In leaping the balustrade Lorin saw the dark and sneering features of Dixmer.

When, as we have said, he had placed himself near Geneviève, she whispered in his ear.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said she, "do you know that Maurice is here?"

"Where?"

"Do not look round directly; one look might prove his ruin."

"Calm yourself."

"Behind us, near the door. What a trial for him if we are condemned!"

Lorin regarded the young woman with tender sympathy.

"We shall be," said he. "I conjure you not to doubt it. The deception would be too cruel if you were to permit yourself to hope."

"Oh, my God!" said Geneviève, "pity our poor friend, who will remain alone in the world!"

Lorin then turned round toward Maurice, and Geneviève also could not refrain from glancing at him.

His eyes were fixed upon them both, and one hand was placed upon his heart.

"There is one way to save you," said Lorin.

"Are you sure?" said Geneviève, her eyes sparkling with joy.

"Oh, of that one I am sure," replied Lorin.

"Oh, if you can save me how I will bless you!"

"But this way —" replied the young man.

Geneviève read his hesitation in his eyes.

"You have also seen *him?*" said she.

"Yes; I have seen him. Will you be saved? Let him, in his turn, take his seat in the iron arm-chair, and you will be safe." Dixmer, doubtless from Lorin's look and the expression of his countenance, divined what he uttered. He at first turned pale, but soon recovered his gloomy composure and satanic smile.

"Impossible!" said Geneviève; "I can no longer hate him."

"Say that he knows your generous nature, and defies you."

"No doubt; for he is sure of him, of me, of us all."

"Geneviève! Geneviève! I am less perfect than you. Let me bring him here! Let him perish!"

"No, Lorin, I conjure you. Nothing in common with that man, not even death. It seems to me I should be unfaithful to Maurice were I to die with Dixmer."

"But you will not die."

"How can I live when Maurice is to die?"

"Ah!" said Lorin, "Maurice has reason to love you; you are an angel, and heaven is the angels' home. Poor dear Maurice!"

In the mean time Simon, who could not overhear the

conversation between the accused, devoured their looks instead of their words.

"Citizen Gendarme," said he, "prevent those conspirators from continuing their plots against the Republic, even in the Revolutionary Tribunal."

"You know, Citizen Simon," replied the gendarme, "that here they conspire no more, and if they do so it will not be for long. These citizens are only conversing together; and since the law does not forbid them to do so in the car, why should it be forbidden at the Tribunal?"

This gendarme was Gilbert, who, having recognized the prisoner taken in the queen's chamber, avowed with his ordinary honesty the interest which he could not help according to her courage and devotion.

The president having consulted the court, at the request of Fouquier Tinville commenced his questions.

"Accused Lorin," demanded he, "of what nature was your acquaintance with the citizen Madame Dixmer?"

"Of what nature, Citizen President?

> "The pure flame of friendship bound us one to another;
> As a sister she loved me, and I her as a brother."

"Citizen Lorin," said Fouquier Tinville, "your poetry is out of season here, and the rhythm is bad."

"Why so?"

"You have one syllable too many."

"Cut it off! cut it off! Citizen Prosecutor! that is your trade, you know."

The imperturbable countenance of Fouquier Tinville assumed a pallid hue at this horrible pleasantry.

"And in what light," demanded the president, "did the Citizen Dixmer view this liaison of a professed Republican with his wife?"

"As to that I can tell you nothing, declaring that I

was never acquainted with the Citizen Dixmer, and never had any desire to be so."

"But," resumed Fouquier Tinville, "you did not tell us that your friend Maurice Lindey formed the link of this pure friendship between yourself and the accused?"

"If I did not say so," replied Lorin, "it was because it seemed to me wrong to speak of it; and I think that you might even follow my example."

"The citizen jurors," said Fouquier Tinville, "will appreciate this singular alliance between an aristocrat and two Republicans, and at the very moment when this aristocrat is convicted of the blackest plot that could be concocted against the nation."

"How should I know anything concerning this plot you speak of?" demanded Lorin, disgusted by the brutal stupidity of the argument.

"You were acquainted with this woman; you were her friend; you term yourself her brother; you speak of her as your sister, — and you were not cognizant of her proceedings? Is it then probable, as you have yourself remarked," continued the president, "that she would have committed alone this act imputed to her?"

"She did not commit it alone," replied Lorin, repeating the technical words used by the president; "since, as she has told you, and I have told you, and now repeat, her husband compelled her."

"Then how is it that you are not acquainted with the husband," said Fouquier Tinville, "since the husband was united with the wife?"

It remained only for Lorin to recount the first disappearance of Dixmer; to mention the amours of Geneviève and his friend; and, in short, to relate the manner in which Dixmer had carried off and concealed his wife in some impenetrable retreat, — it needed only this to ex-

culpate himself from all connivance, and to elucidate the whole mystery. But for this he must betray the secrets of his two friends; to do this would be to put Geneviève to shame before five hundred people. Lorin shook his head, as if saying "no" to himself.

"Well?" demanded the president, "what do you reply to the public prosecutor?"

"That his logic is crushing," said Lorin; "and I am now convinced of one thing which I never even suspected before."

"What is that?"

"That I am, as it appears, one of the most frightful conspirators that has ever been seen."

This declaration elicited a roar of laughter; even the jury could not refrain, so ludicrous was the young man's manner in enunciating these words.

Fouquier felt the ridicule; and since with his usual indefatigable perseverance he had managed to know all the secrets of the accused as well as they did themselves, he could not help feeling toward Lorin a sentiment of pity mingled with admiration.

"Come, Citizen Lorin," said he, "speak in your own defence. The Tribunal will lend a willing ear. We are acquainted with your previous conduct, and it has always been that of a stanch Republican."

Simon essayed to speak; but the president made him a signal to remain silent.

"Speak, Citizen Lorin!" said he; "we are all attention;" but Lorin only shook his head.

"This silence is confession," said the president.

"Not so," said Lorin; "silence is silence, that is all."

"Once more," said Fouquier Tinville; "will you speak?"

Lorin turned toward the audience to encounter the

eyes of Maurice, and to learn from them what course he would wish him to pursue; but Maurice made no sign to him to speak, and Lorin maintained his former silence. This was self-condemnation.

All that followed was quickly executed. Fouquier summed up his accusation; the president reviewed the evidence; the jury retired, and unanimously returned a verdict of "guilty" against Lorin and Geneviève.

The president condemned them both to suffer the penalty of death.

Two o'clock sounded from the great clock of the Palace.

The president had just time sufficient to pronounce the condemnation as the clock struck.

Maurice heard the two with a sense of confusion and utter bewilderment.

When the vibration had ceased, his strength was utterly exhausted. The gendarmes led away Geneviève and Lorin, who had offered her his arm.

Both saluted Maurice, but in different ways. Lorin smiled; but Geneviève, pale and fainting, wafted him a last kiss upon her fingers, bathed in tears.

She had till the last moment clung to the hope of life, and now wept, not the loss of her life, but of her love, which must perish with her.

Maurice, half mad, had not replied to his friends' farewell. He rose, pale and bewildered, from the bench on which he had fallen. His friends had disappeared.

He felt only one sentiment alive within him. It was the hatred which was gnawing at his heart.

He threw a last look around him and recognized Dixmer, who was leaving with the rest of the spectators, and at that moment stooped to pass under the arched door of the passage.

With the rapidity of a steel spring when it unbends, Maurice sprang from bench to bench, and reached the door.

Dixmer had already passed through, and descended into the darkened corridor. Maurice followed behind him. At the moment Dixmer planted his foot on the pavement of the grand hall, Maurice tapped him on the shoulder.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE DUEL.

At this epoch it was always a serious thing to feel a touch upon the shoulder. Dixmer turned, and recognized Maurice.

"Ah! good-day, Citizen Republican," said Dixmer, without evincing any other emotion than an almost imperceptible start, which he immediately repressed.

"Good-day, Citizen Coward," replied Maurice. "You were waiting for me, were you not?"

"That is to say," replied Dixmer, "that, on the contrary, I had ceased to expect you."

"Why was that?"

"Because I expected you sooner."

"I still arrive too soon for you, assassin!" added Maurice, with a murmured growl rather than a voice, since it resembled the grumbling of a storm gathered in his heart, his looks being like the lightning's flashes.

. "You fling fire from your eyes, Citizen," replied Dixmer. "We shall be recognized, and followed."

"Yes; and you fear to be arrested, do you not? You dread lest you might be conducted to the scaffold where you send others. Let them arrest us, so much the better; for it seems to me that the life of one guilty wretch was due to national justice."

"As there is one name the less on the list of people of honor. Is it not so — since yours has disappeared?"

"Well, we shall speak about all that again, I hope; but, in the mean time, you are avenged — miserably avenged — upon a woman. Why, since you have waited for me elsewhere, did you not do so at my house, when you stole away Geneviève?"

"You were the first thief, I believe."

"Neither by your wit nor your words have I ever known you, sir. I know you better by your actions, — witness the day when you wanted to murder me. That day your true nature spoke."

"And I have more than once regretted that I did not listen to it," answered Dixmer, coolly.

"Well," said Maurice, touching his sword, "I offer you your revenge."

"To-morrow, if you like, but not to-day."

"And why to-morrow?"

"Or this evening."

"Why not directly?"

"Because I am engaged till five o'clock."

"Another hideous project!" said Maurice; "another ambush!"

"Really, Monsieur Maurice, you are rather ungrateful!" replied Dixmer. "In truth you are. Here, for six months, I have allowed you to make love to my wife; for six months have permitted your meetings, and have not noticed your smiles. Never man, you must confess, has evinced so little of the tiger in his composition as myself."

"That is to say, you thought I might be useful, and you could mould me to your purpose."

"Without doubt," returned Dixmer, calmly, who ruled his own passion as much as Maurice was carried away by his. "Without doubt; while you were betraying your Republic, and were selling it to me for a look from my

wife; while you were dishonoring yourselves, — you by your treason, she by her adulterous love, — I remained the sage and hero. I waited, and I triumphed."

"Horrible!" said Maurice.

"Is it not? Yes; you appreciate your own conduct fully, sir. It is horrible! — it is infamous!"

"You deceive yourself, sir; the conduct I term horrible and infamous is that of the man to whom the honor of a woman had been confided, who had sworn to guard this honor pure and unsullied, and who, instead of keeping his word and oath, employed her beauty as a shameful bait to ensnare a feeble heart. It was your sacred duty beyond all others to protect this woman, and instead of protecting her, you have sold her."

"What I had to do, sir," replied Dixmer, "I will tell you. I had to save my friend who united with me in this sacred cause. Even as I have sacrificed my property to this cause, so have I sacrificed my honor. As for me, I have completely forgotten, completely effaced myself. Now my friend is no more; he has died by the poniard. My queen is no more; she has died ignominiously on the scaffold. Now! now! I can think of revenge."

"Say of assassination."

"One cannot assassinate an adulteress; when she is killed, she is but punished for her crime."

"This sin you imposed upon her, therefore it was rendered lawful."

"You think so?" said Dixmer, with a sardonic smile. "Judge from her remorse if she believes she has acted lawfully."

"Those who punish strike openly. You, you do not punish; for while striking you fly, and while casting her head to the guillotine you conceal yourself."

"I fly! I hide myself! when did you see that, poor

idiot that you are?" demanded Dixmer. "Is it concealing myself to be present at her condemnation? Is it flying when I go into the Salle des Morts to fling her my last adieu?"

"You are going to see her again, — to fling her a last adieu?" cried Maurice.

"Decidedly you are not expert at revenge, Citizen," replied Dixmer, shrugging his shoulders. "Thus, in my situation you would abandon these events to their strength alone, these circumstances to their natural course; thus, for example, the adulterous woman having merited death, the moment she has received the punishment of death I am quits with her, or rather she is quits with me. No, Citizen Maurice; I know better than that. I have discovered a way to return this woman all the evil she has done me. She loves you, and will die far from you; she detests me, and I will be near her. There!" said he, drawing a pocket-book from his pocket, "do you see this? It contains a card signed by the registrar of the Palace. With this card I can gain near access to the condemned. I will penetrate to Geneviève; I will call her 'Adulteress!' I shall see her curls fall under the hand of the vile executioner, and as they are severed she shall still hear my voice hissing, 'Adulteress!' I will even accompany her to the fatal car, and as she plants her foot upon the scaffold, the last sound that greets her ear shall be the word 'Adulteress!'"

"Take care! she will not have strength to support so much cowardice; she will denounce you."

"No," cried Dixmer, "she hates me too much for that. If she had wished to denounce me she would have done so when her friend urged her so softly. If she did not denounce me to save her life, she will not do so that I may die with her; for she well knows in that case I should

retard her execution for a day. She well knows that if she denounces me, I shall go with her not only to the lowest step of the Palace, but even to the scaffold; she well knows that instead of leaving her at the foot of the ladder, I shall ascend into the car with her, and that, seated by her side, the whole length of the road I shall constantly repeat the one dreadful word 'Adulteress;' that even on the scaffold I shall continue to do so till the moment she sinks into eternity and the accusation falls with her."

Dixmer was frightful in this state of anger and hatred. He seized Maurice by the hand and shook it with a force unknown to the young man, upon whom this had acted with a contrary effect; as Dixmer became excited, Maurice grew calm.

"Listen!" said the young man, "in your vengeance you have omitted one thing."

"What?"

"That you will be able to tell her, 'On leaving the Tribunal, I have seen your lover, and have killed him.'"

"On the contrary, I prefer telling her that you live, and will suffer for the remainder of your days from the spectacle of her death."

"You shall kill me, notwithstanding," said Maurice; "or," added he, turning round and finding himself nearly master of his position, "I will kill you!"

And pale with emotion, and excited by fury, finding his strength redoubled from the restraint he had imposed upon his feelings while listening to the unfolding of Dixmer's horrible project, he seized him by the throat and drew him backward toward a stair which led to the high bank of the river. At the contact with his hand, Dixmer, in his turn, felt hatred rush over him like hot lava.

"You need not compel me by force, I will follow."

"Come, then. You are armed."

"I will follow you."

"No, go first; but I give you notice, at the least sign or gesture I will cleave your skull with my sword."

"You know I am a stranger to fear," said Dixmer, with a smile rendered frightful from his pallor.

"Fear of my sword," said Maurice, "no; but fear of losing your revenge; and now that we are face to face you may bid it adieu."

They had, indeed, arrived at the water's brink; and had any one seen and followed them, he could not have arrived in time to prevent the duel from taking place, since an equal desire for vengeance now animated both. While speaking, they had descended the short stair leading to the Palace square, and gained the nearly deserted quay; for as the condemnations continued, seeing it was two o'clock at least, the crowd still filled the judgment-hall, the corridors, and the courts.

They appeared equally to thirst for each other's blood.

They plunged under one of those arches leading from the cells of the Conciergerie to the river; at this time drained, but then foul and saturated with blood, serving more than once as a means of conveyance for the corpses, which floated far away from the dungeons, leaving no trace behind.

Maurice placed himself between Dixmer and the water.

"I decidedly think I shall kill you, Maurice," said Dixmer, "you tremble so much."

"And I, Dixmer," said Maurice, taking his sword in hand and carefully enclosing him so as to cut off all retreat, — "I, on the contrary, believe that I shall kill you; and having killed you, shall remove from your pocket

book the pass signed by the registrar of the Palace. Nay, you need not button your coat; my sword shall open it, I will be bound, were it even formed of brass like the cuirasses of old."

"And this paper," roared Dixmer, "you will take it, will you?"

"Yes," said Maurice; "I will use the pass. With this talisman I will secure an entrance to Geneviève. I will sit next her in the car; I will murmur in her ear while her life remains, 'I love thee;' and when the last stroke has fallen, I will murmur still, 'I loved thee.'"

Dixmer made a movement with his left hand to take the pass from his pocket, and together with the pocket-book to cast it into the river, when rapid as a thunder-bolt, and trenchant as a hatchet, Maurice's sword fell upon his hand, nearly severing it from the wrist. The wounded man uttered a cry, and shaking his mutilated limb, flung himself furiously on his antagonist.

Then in the obscurity of this gloomy vault the deadly combat commenced. The two men, enclosed in a space so narrow that the sword strokes could not diverge from the line of the body, slid upon the humid pavement, and with difficulty supported themselves by the sides of the arch; the impatience of the combatants caused them to redouble their blows. Dixmer, who, as he felt his life-blood flow, was aware that his strength diminished, charged Maurice so furiously that the latter was compelled to step backward; in so doing he lost his footing, and his enemy's sword grazed his breast. But by a movement rapid as thought, kneeling as he was, he raised the blade with his left arm and turned the point toward Dixmer, who, maddened with rage, darted forward, and impelled by the inclining ground, fell on the sword, the point of which entered his body. He uttered a fearful

imprecation, and the two bodies rolled to the outside of the arch.

One only rose. It was Maurice, — Maurice covered with blood, but with the blood of his enemy.

He drew his sword toward him, and as he drew it the remnant of life which still agitated with a nervous shuddering the limbs of Dixmer, ceased.

Then, when assured that he was dead, Maurice stooped toward the corpse, opened the dead man's coat, withdrew the pass, and hurried away directly.

But on looking at himself he felt assured that in his present state he should not proceed far without being arrested. He was literally covered with blood.

He approached the water's edge, and bending toward the river, washed his hands and coat. He then rapidly ascended the steps, casting a last look toward the arch, from whence a red, smoking stream issued, advancing slowly toward the river.

On approaching the Palace he opened the pocket-book, and there found the pass signed by the registrar.

"Thanks, just God!" murmured he, and he rapidly mounted the steps leading to the Salle des Morts.

It struck three.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE SALLE DES MORTS.

It will be remembered that the registrar of the Palace had opened his jailer's book to Dixmer, and had also entered into an arrangement with him which the presence of Geneviève rendered peculiarly agreeable. This man, it may be imagined, was terribly alarmed when the news of Dixmer's plot was communicated to him. He would doubtless be considered as nothing less than an accomplice of Dixmer, his false colleague, and would therefore be condemned to die with the wretched Geneviève. Fouquier Tinville had summoned him to appear before him.

It may easily be understood that this poor man would have some trouble to prove himself innocent in the eyes of the public prosecutor; he had, however, succeeded in so doing, thanks to Geneviève, whose declaration had clearly established his utter ignorance of the plot of her husband. He had succeeded, thanks to Dixmer's flight, and above all from the interest excited in Fouquier Tinville, who wished to preserve his administration free from all stain.

"Citizen," said he, flinging himself upon his knees before Fouquier, "pardon me, for I have been deceived."

"Citizen," replied the public prosecutor, "an employee of the nation who in these days permits himself to be deceived deserves to be guillotined."

"I may have been a blockhead, Citizen," replied the registrar, who was longing to call Fouquier Tinville "Monseigneur."

"Blockhead or not," replied the rigid prosecutor, "no one should allow his love for the Republic to sleep. The spies of the Capitol were only geese, yet they were sufficiently awake to save Rome."

The registrar looked upon this argument as totally unanswerable; he groaned, and remained waiting.

"I pardon you," said Fouquier Tinville. "I will go so far as to defend you, since I do not wish one of my employees to be even suspected; but you will bear in mind that at the least word that reaches my ears, the least revival of this affair, you shall go to the scaffold."

It is scarcely necessary to say with what anxiety this man sought the newspapers, always in haste to tell what they know, and sometimes more than they can certify, even should they cause the heads of ten men to fall by the guillotine.

He sought Dixmer everywhere, to recommend him to keep his own counsel; but Dixmer had very naturally changed his apartments, and was nowhere to be found.

Geneviève had been placed on the bench of the accused, and had already, in her testimony, declared that neither herself nor husband had any accomplices; and he thanked the poor woman with his eyes as she passed before him on her way to the Tribunal.

When she had passed, and he was returning to the office to fetch some law papers for Fouquier Tinville, he all at once saw Dixmer approaching him with a calm and quiet step.

This vision petrified him.

"Oh!" said he, as if he had seen a spectre.

"Do you not know me?" said the new-comer.

"Of course, I do. You are the Citizen Durand, or rather the Citizen Dixmer."

"Just so."

"But are you a dead man, Citizen?"

"Not yet, as you see."

"I mean to say that they will arrest you."

"Who wants to arrest me? — no one knows me."

"But I know you; and it only needs one word from me to send you to the guillotine."

"And two words from me to send you there with me."

"It is shameful of you to say that."

"No; it is logic."

"But what is your business? Make haste, — speak quickly; for the less time we are together the less danger we incur from each other."

"My wife is about to be condemned, is it not so?"

"I greatly fear for her, poor woman!"

"Well, I wish to see her once more, to bid her adieu."

"Where?"

"In the Salle des Morts."

"Would you dare to enter there?"

"Why not?"

"Oh!" said the registrar, like a man whose hair stood on end at the very thought.

"There must be some way," continued Dixmer.

"To enter the Salle des Morts? Without doubt there is."

"How?"

"To procure a pass."

"And where are these passes to be procured?"

The registrar turned frightfully pale, and stammered, "Where are they to be procured, you ask?"

"I inquire where are they to be procured?" replied Dixmer; "the question is plain enough, I think."

"They are procured — here."

"Ah! true; and who usually signs them?"

"The registrar."

"But you are the registrar?"

"Certainly I am."

"Oh, how lucky that is!" said Dixmer, seating himself, "you will sign me a pass."

The registrar made one bound.

"Do you ask for my head, Citizen?" said he.

"No; I ask you for a pass, that is all."

"I shall have you arrested, unhappy man!" said he, summoning all his energy.

"Do," said Dixmer; "and the next moment I will denounce you as an accomplice, and instead of leaving me to go alone to the famous hall, you shall accompany me."

The registrar turned ghastly pale.

"Villain!" said he.

"There is no villany in that," said Dixmer; "I wish to speak to my wife, and all I require of you is a pass to enable me to do so."

"Is it then so imperative that you should speak to her?"

"It seems so, since I risk my head to do so."

This appeared very plausible to the registrar, and Dixmer immediately perceived that he was relenting.

"Rest assured," said he, "no one shall know anything. The devil! why surely sometimes a similar case to mine must present itself to your notice!"

"Very rarely; it is by no means a common occurrence. But, let me see; let us arrange it in another way."

"If it is possible, I should ask nothing better."

"Nothing is more possible. Enter by the door of the condemned; there a card is not required. Then, when

you have spoken to your wife, call me, and I will let you out."

"Not a bad idea," said Dixmer; "but unfortunately there is a story current in the city."

"What story?"

"The history of a poor hunchback who mistook the door, thinking to enter the archives, but instead of so doing found himself in the hall of which we are now speaking. Only since he had entered by the door of the condemned instead of the large door, as he had no pass to prove his identity, once there he was not permitted to go out. They strenuously maintained that since he entered the door with the other condemned, he was condemned likewise. In vain he protested, swore, appealed; no one believed him, no one came to his assistance, no one helped him to get out. So that, notwithstanding his protestations, his oaths, and supplications, the executioner first cut off his hair, and afterward his head. Is this anecdote true, Citizen Registrar? You ought to know better than any one else."

"Alas! yes; it is too true," said the registrar, trembling.

"You must see then that with such a precedent I should be a fool to enter this cut-throat place without a pass."

"But I shall be there, I tell you."

"But if you should happen to be called away; if you should be otherwise engaged; if you should forget?"

Dixmer laid particular stress on these last words, "if you should forget."

"But since I promise you —"

"No; besides it would compromise you. They would see you speaking to me; and, in short, it does not suit me. I therefore prefer a pass."

"Impossible!"

"Then, dear sir, I will speak; and we shall both take a ride together to the Place de la Revolution."

The registrar, bewildered, stupefied, half-dead with terror, signed a pass for a "citizen."

Dixmer rose and went out precipitately to take his station in the judgment-hall, where we have already seen him. The rest is known to us.

At the same moment the registrar, to avoid all accusation of connivance, went and seated himself near Fouquier Tinville, leaving the management of the office to his head clerk.

At ten minutes to three, Maurice, furnished with the pass, crossing a hedge of turnkeys and gendarmes, arrived without interruption at the fatal door.

When we say fatal, we exaggerate, for there were two doors, — the principal one by which those possessing passes entered and returned; and the door of the condemned, by which no one departed except to the scaffold.

The place that Maurice entered was divided into two compartments. One of these was set apart for those employed in registering the name of the arrivals; the other, furnished only with wooden benches, was appropriated for the reception of those who were arrested and those who were condemned, which amounted to pretty nearly the same thing.

The hall was very dark, lighted only from the panes of the partition which divided it from the register-office.

A female dressed in white, in a half-fainting attitude, lay in a corner, supported against the wall.

A man was standing in front of her, from time to time shaking his head. His arms were crossed upon his breast, and he hesitated to speak to her, as if fearful of restoring her to the consciousness she appeared to have lost.

Around these two individuals several condemned persons were scattered promiscuously, — some giving vent to their feelings in sobs and groans, others joining in patriotic songs, while the remainder walked rapidly up and down, as if to chase away the thoughts which devoured them.

This was indeed the antechamber of death, and the furniture rendered it worthy of the name. Here were seen half-opened coffins filled with straw, seeming as if to invite the living to their beds of repose, the receptacles provided for the ashes of the dead.

There was a large closet opposite the partition. A prisoner, prompted by curiosity, opened it, but recoiled horror-struck. It contained the blood-stained garments of those executed on the preceding evening; long tresses of hair hanging here and there, the executioner's perquisites, who sold them to the relatives when not enjoined by the authorities to burn these precious relics.

Maurice, trembling with emotion, had hardly opened the door, when the whole tableau at once presented itself to his view. He advanced three steps into the hall, and fell at Geneviève's feet. The unfortunate woman uttered a cry, which Maurice stifled on her lips.

Lorin, weeping, pressed his friend in his arms; these were the first tears he had shed.

Strange that all these unhappy individuals, assembled to die together, scarcely looked at the touching tableau presented to their view by their unfortunate fellow-creatures! Every one suffered too much himself to take part in the miseries of others.

The three friends remained for a moment united in a silent embrace, happy, almost joyous. Lorin was the first of the ill-fated group to disengage himself.

"Are you, then, condemned also?" said he to Maurice.

"Yes," replied he.

"Oh, happiness!" murmured Geneviève.

But the joy of those who have only one hour to live cannot last even as long as their lives. Maurice, having contemplated Geneviève with looks of ardent and profound affection, and having thanked her for the expression, at once so egotistical and so tender, which had just escaped her, turned toward Lorin.

"Now," said he, taking Geneviève's hands within his own, "let us talk together."

"Yes," said Lorin; "let us converse while the time remains to us. It is only right so to do. What do you wish to say to me, Maurice?"

"You have been arrested for my sake, condemned on account of her. As for Geneviève and me, we are paying our debt; it is not fair, at the same time, that you should be made to pay also."

"I do not understand you."

"Lorin, you are free."

"I free? You are mad!" said Lorin.

"No, I am not mad; I repeat that you are free. See, here is a pass. They will inquire who you are; you are employed at the registrar-office of the Carmelites, and are going to speak to the registrar of the Palace; you have, from motives of curiosity, requested a pass from him to see the condemned; you have seen them, and are now leaving, perfectly satisfied with your visit."

"This is a joke, is it not?"

"No, indeed, my friend; here is the pass, take advantage of it. You are not a lover, like myself; you do not need to die that you may be enabled to pass a few more minutes in the society of the well-beloved of your heart, and not to lose a second of eternity with her."

"But, Maurice," replied Lorin, "if one might be able

to get out from here — a circumstance I swear to you I could not have believed possible — why do you not first save the lady? As to yourself, we will consider afterward about that."

"Impossible!" said Maurice, with a frightful oppression at his heart, "this card is for a man, not for a lady; besides, Geneviève would not depart, and leave me here, to live herself, while knowing that I remained to die."

"If she would not, then why should I? Do you imagine I possess less courage than a woman?"

"No, dear friend; I know and acknowledge your bravery, but nothing can excuse your obstinacy in this case. Then profit by this moment, and allow us the supreme felicity of knowing and feeling that you are free and happy."

"Happy!" exclaimed Lorin; "you are facetious, surely? Happy without you, eh? What the devil am I to do in this world without you; in Paris, without my usual avocations? Never to see you again, never to weary you more with my doggerel rhymes, — ah, good faith, no!"

"Lorin, my friend —"

"Exactly; it is because I am your friend that I persist in my opinion. With the prospect of recovering you both, were I a prisoner as I now am, I would tear down the walls; but to save myself, and go out from here alone into the streets, my head bowed down with a feeling resembling remorse, and a continual cry in my ears: 'Maurice! — Geneviève!' To pass into certain quarters and before certain houses where I have seen your persons, but shall now only recognize your shadows; to come at last to such an extremity of despair as to execrate this dear Paris that I have loved so well; ah, by my faith,

no! And I find there was good reason for proscribing kings, were it only on account of King Dagobert."

"And what relation has King Dagobert with what concerns us?"

"What? Did not this frightful tyrant say to the great Éloi, 'The best company must part?' Ah, well! I am a Republican, and I say that nothing should make us quit good company, not even the guillotine; I feel very comfortable here, and here I will remain."

"My poor friend! my poor friend!" said Maurice.

Geneviève said nothing, but looked at them with eyes bathed in tears.

"You regret to lose your life, then?" said Lorin.

"Yes, on her account."

"I am not in the least sorry at losing mine, not even on account of the Goddess Reason, who, I had forgotten to tell you, has latterly behaved most shamefully to mè; who will not take the trouble even to console herself, like the other Arthémise of old. I shall go to my death perfectly cool and rather facetious. I will amuse all the beggarly wretches who follow the car. I will repeat a pretty quatrain to Monsieur Sanson, and wish the company good-night, — that is to say — wait! —" Lorin interrupted himself. "Ah! to be sure," said he, "I will go out. I well knew that I loved no one, but I forgot that I hated some one. The time, Maurice, the time?"

"Half-past three."

"I have time, Heaven! there is time."

"Certainly," cried Maurice; "there are nine more accused persons still to be tried, this will not terminate before five o'clock; we have therefore nearly two hours' respite."

"That is all that I require; give me your pass, and lend me twenty sous."

"*Mon Dieu!* what are you going to do?" murmured Geneviève. Maurice pressed his hand. The all-important thing for him was that Lorin was going out.

"I have my own plan," said Lorin.

Maurice drew his purse from his pocket, and placed it in his friend's hand.

"Now, the pass, for the love of God! — I ought to say for the love of the Supreme Being."

Maurice gave him the pass.

Lorin kissed Geneviève's hand, and availing himself of the moment when a fresh batch of the condemned were ushered in, he leaped the benches, and presented himself before the principal entrance.

"Eh!" said the gendarme, "here is one, it appears to me, trying to escape."

Lorin drew himself up and presented his pass.

"Hold, Citizen Gendarme," said he, "and learn to know people better."

The gendarme recognized the signature of the registrar, but belonging to a class of functionaries rather wanting in confidence, and as at this moment the registrar himself came down from the Tribunal with a nervous shudder, which had not left him since he had so imprudently hazarded his signature, —

"Citizen Registrar," said he, "here is a pass bearing your signature, with which this person wishes to leave the Salle des Morts, is it all right?"

The registrar turned pale with fright, and feeling convinced that if he turned his eyes in that direction it would only be to encounter the terrible look of Dixmer, hastily seized the card and replied, —

"Yes, yes; it is my signature."

"Then," cried Lorin, "if it is your signature, return it to me."

"No;" said the registrar, tearing it into a thousand pieces; "these cards can be available only once."

Lorin remained for a moment irresolute.

"So much the worse," said he; "but above all things it is necessary I should kill him;" and he passed through the office.

Maurice had followed Lorin with an emotion easy to comprehend. When he had disappeared, Maurice returned, saying with an exultation nearly amounting to joy, "He is saved! Geneviève; the card is destroyed, therefore he cannot enter. Besides, even if he were able to gain admission, the sitting of the Tribunal will have terminated. At five o'clock, he will return; but we shall have ceased to live."

Geneviève shuddered, and breathed a deep sigh.

"Oh, press me in your arms," said she, "and let us separate no more! Why is it not possible, oh, my God! for one blow to annihilate us both, that together we might breathe our last sigh?"

Then retiring into the depth of the gloomy hall, Geneviève placed herself near Maurice, and twined her arms round his neck. Thus they remained, rendered by the strength of their love insensible to the surrounding scene, almost to the approach of death itself.

Half an hour passed thus.

CHAPTER LV.

WHY LORIN WENT OUT.

SUDDENLY a loud noise was heard; the gendarmes entered by the lower door, behind them appearing Sanson and his assistants, the latter carrying rolls of cord.

"Oh, my love!" said Geneviève, "the fatal moment has arrived, and I feel that my senses are leaving me!"

"There you are wrong," said the cheering voice of Lorin.

"That you are wrong is plain, you see;
For what is death but to be free?"

"Lorin!" cried Maurice, in despair.

"They are not good, are they? I have adopted your opinion since yesterday; I can only make contemptible —"

"Ah! that is the question. You are returned, unhappy man, you are returned!"

"I considered that was our agreement But listen, as what I have to say to you will also interest the lady."

"My God! my God!"

"Allow me to speak, or I shall not have time to tell you all. I wished to go out that I might purchase a knife in the Rue de la Baullerie."

"What did you want with a knife?"

"I wished to despatch this nice Monsieur Dixmer."

Geneviève shuddered.

"Ah!" said Maurice, "I comprehend."

"I purchased it. Listen attentively to what I said to myself, and you will understand your friend has a mind

for logic; indeed, I begin to think I should have been a mathematician instead of a poet. Unfortunately, it is now too late. This is the way I reasoned: Monsieur Dixmer has compromised his wife; Monsieur Dixmer was present at her trial; and Monsieur Dixmer will not deprive himself of the pleasure of seeing her pass in the fatal car; especially as we accompany her. I will then look out for him among the foremost of the spectators. I will glide near him, and say, 'Good-day, Monsieur Dixmer;' and I will plunge my knife into his heart."

"Lorin!" cried Geneviève.

"Compose yourself, dear friend; Providence had arranged all. Picture to yourselves the spectators, instead of remaining stationary in front of the Palace, according to their usual custom, made a half-turn to the right, and lined the quay. 'Oh!' said I to myself, 'it is doubtless a dog drowned. Why should not Dixmer be there? Even a dog drowning will serve to pass away the time.' I approached the parapet, and beheld all along the high bank a crowd of people who, throwing their arms aloft into the air, and uttering loud exclamations, stooped down to gaze at something on the ground. I joined them, and also looked down. There was something! — Guess what it was."

"Dixmer!" said Maurice, in a gloomy tone.

"Yes. How could you guess that? Yes; it was Dixmer, killed by a ghastly wound. The unfortunate wretch had no doubt committed suicide in expiation of his guilt."

"Ah," said Maurice, with a sad smile, "do you think so?"

Geneviève let her head droop between her hands. She was too feeble to support these successive emotions.

"Yes; I thought so, from his blood-stained sword

being found near him; unless, indeed — he had met some one."

Maurice, without reply, availing himself of the moment when Geneviève, overpowered by emotion, did not observe him, opened his coat and displayed to Lorin his waistcoat and shirt stained with blood.

"Ah! that alters the case," said Lorin, as he held out his hand to Maurice. "Now," said he, whispering in his ear, "they have not searched me, seeing that I entered in Sanson's suite. I have still the knife, if the guillotine is too revolting to your feelings."

Maurice seized the weapon with a joyful expression.

"No," said he, "she would suffer too much," and he returned the knife to Lorin.

"You are right," said Lorin; "long live Monsieur Guillotine! Why, what is it, after all? A fillip on the neck, according to Danton. And what signifies a fillip?"

And he flung his knife in the midst of a group of the condemned, one of whom immediately seized and buried it in his breast. He was dead in an instant.

At the same moment Geneviève awoke, and uttered a piercing cry. She felt the pressure of the executioner's hand upon her shoulder.

CHAPTER LVI.

LONG LIVE SIMON !

At the sound of this cry Maurice understood that the struggle was about to commence. The influence of love may be able to exalt the soul to heroism, — it may, against natural instinct, impel a human being to desire death, but it had not in this instance extinguished the repugnance to pain. It was evident that Geneviève resigned herself the more patiently to death since Maurice was to die with her; but resignation does not exclude suffering, and to quit this world is not only to fall into the abyss termed unknown, but also to suffer in the descent.

Maurice, at a glance, embraced the entire scene, and thought of what would follow.

In the centre of the hall lay the suicide, from whose breast the gendarme had just torn the weapon of destruction, fearing, probably, it might be used by some of the others.

Around him were several individuals mute with despair and scarcely heeding him, inscribing in their pocket-books some disconnected words, or pressing one another's hands; some repeating, without any intermission, a cherished name, or bathing with tears a portrait, a ring, or tress of hair; some venting imprecations against tyranny, a state of affairs cursed by all, ay sometimes even by the tyrants themselves. In the midst of these unfortunates, Sanson, oppressed less from his fifty years than his melancholy office, — Sanson, as mild, and as much their con-

soler as his terrible vocation permitted him to be, to this one offered advice, to that one some sad consolation or encouragement, finding some Christian responses to their accents of despair as well as to their bravado.

"Citizeness," said he to Geneviève, "I must remove your scarf, and cut off your hair, if you please."

Geneviève began to tremble.

"Come, dear lady," said Lorin, softly, "take courage!"

"May I remove the lady's hair?" asked Maurice.

"Oh, yes," cried Geneviève; "I entreat you to permit him to do so, Monsieur Sanson."

"He may," said the old man, turning away his head.

Maurice first took off his necktie, and Geneviève, stooping, fell on her knees before the young man, presenting her charming head, appearing more beautiful in her grief than she had ever been in her days of sunshine and happiness.

When Maurice had completed the funereal operation, his hands were so tremulous and his countenance betrayed so much grief that Geneviève exclaimed, —

"Ah! I am courageous, Maurice."

Sanson turned round.

"Is it not so, sir?" said Geneviève; "am I not courageous?'

"Certainly, Citizen," replied the executioner, in a perturbed voice, "for yours is true courage."

In the mean time the first assistant had glanced over the list forwarded by Fouquier Tinville.

"Fourteen," said he.

Sanson counted the condemned.

"Fifteen, including the dead," said he; "why, how is this?"

Lorin and Geneviève counted after him, both struck by the same thought.

"You say there are only fourteen condemned, and that we are fifteen?" said she.

"Yes; the Citizen Fouquier Tinville must have made a mistake."

"Ah! you spoke falsely, then," said Geneviève, turning to Maurice; "you were not condemned."

"And why wait for to-morrow, when you die to-day?" said Maurice.

"My love," said she, smiling, "you reassure me; I am now convinced that it is easy to die."

"Lorin," said Maurice, "now for the last time — no one here can recognize you — say that you came to bid me adieu; say that you have been shut in by mistake; call the gendarme who saw you go out. I am the true criminal who ought to die. But you, my friend, we beseech you to live to love our memory. There is yet time, Lorin; we entreat you!"

Geneviève joined her hands in an attitude of prayer. Lorin took both her hands and kissed them.

"I have said no, and I mean no," said Lorin, in a firm voice; "say no more on the subject, or I shall think I am a bore to you."

"Fourteen," repeated Sanson, "and here are fifteen;" then elevating his voice, "Is there any one here who can protest against this?" said he; "is there any one here who can prove he is here by mistake?"

Perhaps some lips half-opened at this question, but closed again without uttering a single word; since those who felt inclined to lie were ashamed to do so, and those who would not lie were determined not to speak.

A silence of several minutes ensued, during which the assistants continued their mournful office.

"Citizens, we are ready," said old Sanson, in his deep and solemn voice. He was answered only by sobs and groans.

"Well!" said Lorin, "so be it!

No death is nobler, none more high,
Than for our native land to die.

Yes, to die for our native land; but decidedly I begin to think we do not die for her, but for the pleasure of those who witness our deaths. Faith! Maurice, I have adopted your opinion. I am disgusted with the Republic!"

"The call!" said a commissary, at the door.

Several gendarmes entered the hall, closing up the issues, thus placing themselves between life and the condemned, as if to prevent them from returning to it.

The death-roll was called.

Maurice, who had witnessed the trial of the condemned man who had destroyed himself, when his name was called answered in his stead. They then found that, excepting the dead man, the number was correct.

The corpse was removed from the hall; but if the man's identity had been established, and he had been recognized as one condemned, he would have been guillotined with the rest, though already dead.

The survivors were pushed toward the outlet, in order that as each passed before the wicket his hands might be tied behind his back. For the space of ten minutes not a word was exchanged between these unfortunates; the executioners alone seemed endowed with life or motion.

Maurice, Geneviève, and Lorin, not being any longer able to retain their hold of each other, crowded together that they might not be separated.

When the condemned were removed from the Conciergerie into the court, the scene became truly appalling. Several grew faint at the sight of the carts, and the turnkeys were compelled to assist them to mount the steps of these vehicles of death. Behind the still closed doors

was heard the confused murmur of the crowd; and it might be inferred from the sound that the concourse was immense.

Geneviève courageously ascended the car; Maurice at her side sustained her; he sprang in rapidly after her.

Lorin did not hurry himself, but carefully selected his seat at the left of Maurice.

The doors opened, and foremost in the crowd stood Simon. The two friends immediately recognized him; indeed, the recognition was mutual. He was standing upon a fence near which the cars must pass, for there were three of them. The car containing our three friends moved first.

"Ah! good-day to you, my brave grenadier!" said Simon to Lorin; "you are going to try the effect of my leather-cutting machine, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Lorin; "and I will be careful not to notch it, that it may be ready when your turn comes."

The two remaining cars followed the direction of the first. And now commenced a terrific tempest of cries, shouts, groans, and maledictions, surrounding and following the condemned.

"Courage! Geneviève, take courage!" murmured Maurice.

"Oh!" replied the young woman, "I do not wish for life since I die with you. I regret only that my hands are tied, so that I cannot embrace you before I die."

"Lorin," said Maurice, "feel in my waistcoat pocket, there you will find a knife."

"Zounds!" said Lorin, "a penknife is the very thing needed; I should be ashamed to die, garroted like a calf."

Maurice placed his pocket on a level with his friend's hands; Lorin found the knife, which between them they

succeeded in opening. Maurice then placed it between his teeth, and severed the cord which bound Lorin's hands, who, the moment they were free, performed the same office for Maurice.

"Make haste!" said the young man; "Geneviève is fainting."

In fact, to accomplish this operation Maurice had for a moment turned from Geneviève, when, as if all her strength had been derived from him, her eyes closed, and her head sank upon her breast.

"Geneviève, open your eyes, my love," said Maurice; "we have only a few minutes more to see each other in this world."

"The cords wound me," murmured the young woman.

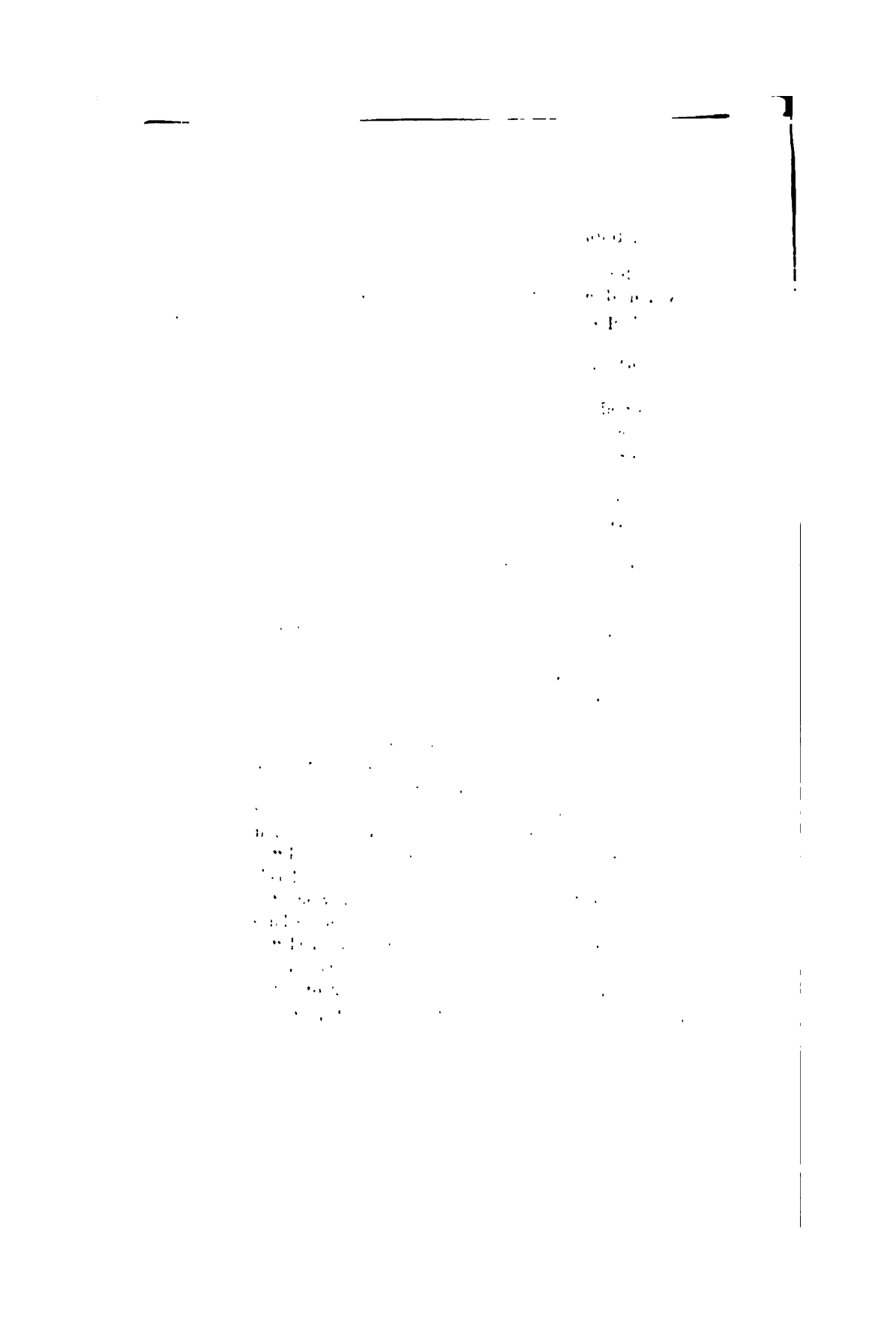
Maurice unbound them. She immediately re-opened her eyes, and rose, radiant with almost celestial beauty. She threw one fair arm around Maurice's neck, and with the other hand took that of Lorin; and thus, all three standing in the cart, with two more victims lying at their feet wrapped in the stupor of anticipated death, they gazed toward heaven with a look of ardent gratitude for having been permitted to support and console each other, while those who had outraged and insulted them previously were now perfectly silent. The scaffold was in sight. Maurice and Lorin beheld it. Geneviève did not; she saw naught but her lover. The car stopped.

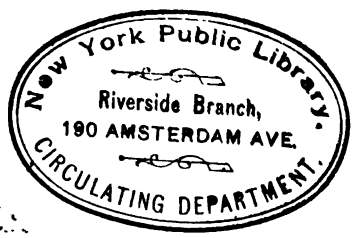
"I love thee!" said Maurice to Geneviève; "I love thee!"

"The woman first! the woman first!" shouted a thousand voices.

"Thanks, good people," said Maurice; "who then can call you cruel?"

He took Geneviève within his arms, pressed his lips fondly upon hers, and delivered her to Sanson.

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CIRCULATING DEPARTMENT.

"Courage!" cried Lorin; "courage!"

"I have it!" said Geneviève; "I have it!"

"I love thee!" murmured Maurice; "I love thee!"

They were no longer victims about to be slaughtered, but friends making a festival of death.

"Adieu!" cried Geneviève to Lorin.

"Farewell, till we meet again!" replied he.

And Geneviève disappeared under the fatal drop.

"After you," said Lorin.

"After you," replied Maurice.

"Hark! she calls you."

At this moment Geneviève uttered her last cry.

"Come!" said she.

A furious uproar took place in the crowd. The fair and graceful head had fallen.

Maurice rushed forward.

"It is exactly correct," said Lorin; "let us follow logic. Do you hear me, Maurice?"

"Yes."

"She loved you, and they have murdered her first; you are not condemned, and therefore die the second; and I, who have done nothing, being the greatest criminal of the three, die the last.

> And thus you see how passing clear
> Logic makes everything appear.

Good faith! Citizen Sanson, I promised you a quatrain; but you must be content with a distich."

"I did love thee!" murmured Maurice, lying on the fatal plank, and smiling at the head of his beloved, — "I did lo — " The knife cut short the last word.

"Now for my turn!" cried Lorin, bounding on the scaffold, "and be quick, or I shall lose my head! Citizen

Sanson, I owe you two verses, instead of which I offer you a pun."

Sanson placed him in his turn.

"Let us see," said Lorin, — "it is the fashion to cry long live something, when dying. Once it was, 'Vive le Roi,' but now there is no king; next the cry was, 'Vive la Liberté,' but there is no more liberty. Faith, Long live Simon! say I, who unites us all three."

And the head of the generous and noble-hearted young man fell near those of Maurice and Geneviève.

THE END.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

"THE reign of Louis XIV.," says M. Arsène Houssaye,[1] "is divided into three periods, dominated by three influences, — three stars, three women.

"The first is the epoch of half-Spanish, half-French gallantry. It is personified in Mademoiselle de la Vallière. . . .

"The second period of the reign is symbolized by Madame de Montespan, . . . who exults in being queen by grace of Love. With her opens the military epic, the era of conquest. The tendency is to materialism of the heart, to paganism of sentiment. . . . It is the age of action, of maturity, of strength. Everything yields to the victorious king, — citadels and women.

"The third and last part of the reign is summed up in Madame de Maintenon. Sensual mysticism has replaced the pomp and activity of the old court. The dying century becomes a hermit, glory takes the veil. . . . Louis XIV., that king over whom a woman reigns, droops slowly toward his grave. . . . Madame de Maintenon is the hand by which the Gallican church sways the old age of Louis XIV.

[1] "Galérie du XVIII^me^ Siècle. — La Régence."

Quietism offends the shrewd, powerful, intriguing woman, who bears, not without dignity, the weight of the crown. That uncrowned queen gives its shape, as they said in those days, to the close of the reign. . . . Everything assumes the mask of piety."

And again he says: "If his youth was imprisoned in the dense forest of the passions, as Saint Augustine hath it, his old age was confined behind bolts and bars in an impenetrable citadel, of which Scarron's widow was the keeper. There are no more abject slaves than tyrants."

It would be easy to multiply authorities in support of the accuracy of the picture drawn by Dumas in these pages of the state of society in the first decade of the eighteenth century, when, under the leadership of the incompetent generals who owed their commissions to their subservience to "Scarron's widow," France was struggling on, from defeat to defeat, from Blenheim to Ramillies and Turin and Oudenarde and Malplaquet, through the bloody, disastrous years of the War of the Spanish Succession.

It was the period of the "government of the saints."[1] From the fall of Louvois in 1691, Madame de Maintenon's influence was practically unlimited and unshared until after the crushing disaster of Blenheim (1704), when she was obliged to come to terms, and, to some extent, share her power with the Duc de Bourgogne, and his governors, the Ducs de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, and with the king's confessor, "a hard-hearted, atrabilious old

[1] Michelet.

villain, Père Tellier, whose bitter gall made the whites of his squinting eyes yellow."

Versailles was a gloomy place during the supremacy of Madame de Maintenon and her Jesuit allies, and that supremacy endured until the death of the king in 1715, when the accession to power of the pleasure-loving, easy-going Regent inaugurated an era of license and immorality. Not only was the power of the favorite shown in the repression of gayety and amusement in every form, but her favor and that of the ultra-religious faction counted for vastly more than the patronage of the greatest nobles in the distribution of lucrative offices and of commissions in the army and navy. However great a man's merit might be, his chance of preferment or promotion was small, unless he were resigned to the necessity of going to Versailles with a sanctimonious expression on his face, and kissing La Maintenon's withered hand.

The episode of the chevalier's arrest and imprisonment is entirely consistent with the customs of the time. The history of the Bastile is full of instances which vouch for its probability. It will be remembered that the one fact which more than any other drew the attention of the Parisian populace to the grim old fortress in 1789 was the recent release of one Latude, who had been confined there for more than forty years upon no ascertainable charge, but presumably to gratify the enmity of some powerful family or individual. During the first fifteen years of the eighteenth century no more heinous offence could be committed than to speak

or write slightingly of the old king's unacknowledged wife, nor could any surer way of ruining an enemy be devised than to bring to her notice evidence of such sacrilege.

In his "Mémoires" (vol. 9), Dumas tells us of his first venture in the domain of historical romance. Soon after the founding of the "Revue des Deux Mondes,"[1] he contributed to that periodical certain "Scènes Historiques" relating to the reign of Charles VI., adapted from Barante's "Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne," and afterwards published under the title "Isabel de Bavière." He tells us that he was utterly ignorant of French history until he read Barante's book, but that the success of his "Scènes Historiques," which made one of the first successes of the "Revue des Deux Mondes," led him to decide to write a series of romances extending from the reign of Charles VI. to our own time. How nearly he accomplished his design the volumes previously published in this series will sufficiently show. There is, however, a hiatus between the conclusion of the "Vicomte de Bragelonne"[2] and the "Chevalier d'Harmental," the action of which takes place in the early years of the Regency, about 1717. That hiatus the present volume serves partially to fill.

[1] In 1830 or 1831 the periodical called "Journal des Voyages" was purchased by M. Buloz and others, who changed its name as well as its character, and called it the "Revue des Deux Mondes."

[2] The death of D'Artagnan seems to have occurred between 1680 and 1690.

LIST OF CHARACTERS.

Period, 1708-1716.

Louis XIV., King of France.
Madame de Maintenon.
Marquis de Royancourt, a favorite of Madame de Maintenon.
Père Letellier.
Baron Agénor Palamède d'Anguilhem.
La Baronne Cornélie Athenaïs d'Anguilhem, his wife.
Chevalier Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem, their son.
Abbé Dubuquoi, tutor to the Chevalier.
The Mother Superior of the Convent of the Augustines, the Chevalier's aunt.
Vicomte de Bouzenois, a relative of Baron d'Anguilhem.
Madame de Bouzenois, his wife, a native of Malabar.
Monsieur Afghano, her son, an East Indian.
Marquis de Chemillé, }
Monsieur Gantry, } friends of Baron d'Anguilhem.
Monsieur de Birgarou, }
Vicomte de Beuzerie, a neighbor of Baron d'Anguilhem.
Madame de Beuzerie, his wife.
Constance de Beuzerie, their daughter, in love with the Chevalier.
Mademoiselle Herminie de Narcey, friend to Constance.
Henri de Narcey, her brother.
The Curé of La Chapelle Saint-Hippolyte.
Maître Coquenard, attorney to Baron d'Anguilhem.
Marquis de Cretté, friend to the Chevalier.

VICOMTE D'HERBIGNY,
COMTE DE CHASTELLUX,
MONSIEUR DE TRÉVILLE,
CHEVALIER DE CLOS-RENAUD, } friends to Marquis de Cretté.

BASQUE, valet to Marquis de Cretté.

BOISJOLI,
RAMEAU-D'OR, } servants to the Marquis.
PETITPAS,

BRETON, servant to the Chevalier.

MESSIEURS DE KOLLINSKI, Hungarian gentlemen.

COMTE DE GORKAÜN,
MONSIEUR DE BARDANE, } their friends.

MADEMOISELLE POUSSETTE, of the Comédie-Française.

MAÎTRE BRANCHU,
MAÎTRE VERNIQUET, } advocates.

MAÎTRE JEAN AMÉDÉE BOUTEAU, *conseiller-rapporteur.*

CHRISTINE SYLVANDIRE BOUTEAU, his daughter.

THE GOVERNOR OF FOR-L'ÉVÊQUE.

COMTE D'OLIBARUS, a prisoner at For-l'Évêque and the Bastile.

MONSIEUR VOYER D'ARGENSON, lieutenant of police.

AN AGENT OF MAÎTRE BOUTEAU.

A SARDINIAN BROKER.

A TUNISIAN CORSAIR.

MESDEMOISELLES MARIE and GOTHON, servants in the household of Baron d'Anguilhem.

LAJEUNESSE, the Baron d'Anguilhem's gamekeeper.

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SYLVANDIRE.

I.

THE CHEVALIER ROGER TANCRÈDE D'ANGUILHEM AND HIS FAMILY IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1708.

In a work much more serious than this one pretends to be, we have shown how the French nobility were marked for destruction by three men: Louis XI., Richelieu, Robespierre. Louis XI. felled the feudal lords, Richelieu laid low the grandees, Robespierre cut down the aristocracy.

The first paved the way for the centralized monarchy, the second for the absolute monarchy, the third for the constitutional monarchy.

But, as the events we are about to relate took place between the years 1708 and 1716, we shall permit history to appraise, under their social bearings, the work of the forester king and the acts and deeds of the guillotining tribune, and merely cast a swift glance over the condition of Paris and the country at large seventy years after the death of Richelieu, that is, at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

In saying Paris, we mistake, — we should say Versailles, for at that period Paris was forgotten. Louis XIV. had never been able to pardon the capital for

having cast him, child as he was, from her bosom during one of the stormy days of the Fronde, and as, in his fulness of might, he took the same pleasure in avenging himself upon things as upon men, he had created Versailles, — that unworthy favorite, as it was then called, that gigantic piece of folly, as it will in all times be called, — with intent to punish the old Louvre for its old-time rebellion by withdrawing his royal presence.

So Versailles, from the day when Louis XIV. transferred his residence thither, was the luminous centre of the realm, the torch about which all the gilded moths called courtiers gathered to scorch their wings, the sun which rose on the world, not less resplendent than others, and whose light and power must increase as it advanced.[1]

Thus, the concentration of immeasurable splendor upon Versailles reduced the rest of the kingdom to darkness. All that did not revolve around the supreme star seemed to belong to an inferior system, an unknown vortex not worth while for the political astronomers of the time to investigate; as a result, during the seventy-three years that the reign of Louis XIV. endured, the history of Versailles is pretty nearly the history of France.

Consequently, in the magnificent gallery opened up by the memoirs of that period to the curiosity of readers, one reviews nothing but great fortunes and great failures. We follow the rise of Louvois, of Villars, of d'Argenson, of Colbert, and the fall of Rohan, of Richelieu, of Lauzun, and the Guises; but, as for the brave and loyal nobility of the provinces that formerly constituted the strength of the monarchy, which under

[1] *Nec pluribus impar* and *Vires acquirit eundo* formed the double device of the sun which Louis XIV. had taken for his arms.

Duguesclin had driven the Black Prince from Guyenne, and, under Joan of Arc, King Henri VI. from France, it no longer existed, or, rather, because from the field of action it gave no signs of life, one might say it had ceased to exist.

As a fact, far from the sun, and consequently from the light, it was vegetating in darkness and oblivion.

Had the choice of the subject been ours, we should without any doubt have established our hero among those fine courtiers whom Saint Simon exhibits as assisting regularly every day at the king's rising and retiring, unsettled by a frown, flourishing under a smile, and dying of despair at a sharp word; but, first of all, we are a historian, hence we must take our hero where we find him. Besides, the time may come when, attached as we are to his suite, we shall find ourselves obliged to accompany him outside of his provincial obscurity, and appear with him for a brief space in that circle of light which Versailles, even at that period of decadence, was still shedding around her.

But for the present, we beg our readers to forego Versailles, which, for that matter, Madame de Maintenon's presence had for some time rendered a very dull place of abode, and accompany us two hundred and thirty-two kilometres from Paris, as the new law compels us to say. Four kilometres forming a league, our readers will have only to divide two hundred and thirty-two by four, if they insist upon knowing their exact distance from the capital. We should prefer to spare them that trouble; but, as we are made to pay a fine of fifty francs every time we employ the old denominations, we are obliged by stress of economy to refer them to the fourth arithmetical rule; it is very awkward, but this is the way of it.

We find ourselves, then, on the left bank of the Loire, in the neighborhood of the town of Loches, in a beautiful plain between the Indre and the Cher, interspersed with woods pretentiously called forests, and pools ostentatiously spoken of as lakes.

This plain was a veritable nest of country-seats, where vegetated the remnants of all those lordly families from which Louis XI. had hacked the roots and Richelieu lopped the heads; also, thanks to the destruction of châteaux, the confiscation of lands, and the restriction of privileges, all those brave country gentlemen, high-born as Charlemagne, were as poor as Job. Robber-chiefs of old under Philip Augustus and Louis XI., heads of factions under Philip the Fair and Charles V., captains under François I. and Henri II., they had ended by becoming ensigns or sergeants in the armies of Henri IV. and Louis XIII.; then, last of all, no longer finding employment, even in the lowest ranks of the army, for the old swords of their ancestors, upon which rust had by degrees effaced the gilding, they had returned to the primitive times of which the Bible speaks, and, like Nimrod, had become mighty hunters before the Lord. In short, they were, as we have seen, the descendants of the oldest, the richest, and the noblest families in France; but, it must be admitted, they were in every respect very degenerate descendants.

In fact, the great landholders had gradually been attracted to Versailles, and old Touraine of the magnificent châteaux had emigrated with all its goods and chattels to the neighborhoods of Chartres and Maintenon. Undergoing the universal decay, Loches had ceased to be a royal town, and the country squires of the region, inhabiting a rich, peaceful, but forsaken country, however they may have combated the sov-

ereignty of silence and oblivion during the last days, had felt the pall of obscurity gradually settle down upon their heads.

Men submit to such a state of affairs, but they do not become resigned. As a result, throughout the entire province there was at this time a sullen reaction against the government of the mighty king. Thus, our gentlemen, led by their wounded self-esteem into the movement of general disaffection just mentioned, filled the places of absent things with names which recalled them. Their houses continued to be designated châteaux; the outer walls were ramparts, and the muddy ditch where a dozen tame ducks paddled was a moat; there was a court of honor, the sole and only court; they spoke of the armory, but its stores were ordinarily fruit or milk; lastly, there was the chapel, and it was just the nearest village church, in most cases reached only after an hour's tramp through the fields.

However, setting aside vanity, and excluding the relation between names and their values, all these country-seats might have been bowers of happiness, had their inhabitants not thought it humiliation to acknowledge they were happy. Their vanity, it is true, entrenched itself behind their disaffection, and, too poor to go to Versailles, they proclaimed aloud that they had but a low opinion of the court, and that overtures were continually made them, only to be repelled. Now, since all repeated the same thing, they were certainly under mutual obligations to appear to believe one another. Of course this petty defection did not get beyond the boundaries of the province, and, for the fifty or sixty years during which it was perpetuated as a legacy from father to son, it never reached the king's ears.

Moreover, in this little corner of the earth which

formed part of what is called the garden of France, a gentleman with an income of two thousand crowns passed for opulent; and very few indeed were the incomes that reached this desirable figure. The majority of the martyrs possessed an average income of from twenty-five hundred to three thousand livres, and a few who were reduced to one hundred and fifty or two hundred pistoles a year, still found means, in spite of this slender income, to figure not too disadvantageously, with their families, which were sometimes numerous, at the gatherings of neighboring country-seats.

Furthermore, all these brave lords, or their ancestors rather, had formerly enjoyed magnificent and very comprehensive rights which in course of time had fallen into disuse; but this fact, when they chanced to shake out their crumpled parchments, and read over their charters, did not prevent their experiencing a certain pride in the fact that they might do unspeakable things, and that they possessed the privileges of a Procrustes, a Geryon, or a Phalaris. Thus, a petty farmer of the Baron Agénor Palamède d'Anguilhem was one day very much startled to hear his lord and master proclaim at a wolf-hunt, with a stamp of his foot, —

"By a charter right of the thirteenth century, the Anguilhems may, once a year, at the chase, warm their feet in the vitals of one of their dependents ripped open by their carver."

It is unnecessary to add that neither the worthy gentleman nor any of his ancestors had ever had such cold feet as to feel the need of resorting to this strange expedient.

As the Baron d'Anguilhem's name has just slipped from our pen, let us profit by the occasion to say who and what he was.

The Baron Agénor Palamède d'Anguilhem was one of the suzerain landholders whose fortunes we have just figured up, and whose privileges we have enumerated. He inhabited a château in the upper part of the valley, possessed sixty sheep and six cows, sold the wool for two hundred francs a year, and harvested three hundred francs' worth of hemp in the same length of time, in all five hundred francs, which he generously handed over to Madame la Baronne d'Anguilhem for the expenses of her toilet and the bringing up of her son.

Madame la Baronne Cornélie Athenaïs d'Anguilhem had only six gowns, but they were each, if not perfectly fashionable, at least exquisitely beautiful. One dated from her wedding, another from the christening of her son, who was by courtesy styled baronet, although, in the aristocratic hierarchy, he had a right only to the title of chevalier, which title simply we shall give him, not being influenced by the motives of flattery that prompted those who surrounded him. As for the baroness' other four dresses, they were of more recent date and more modern cut; yet this did not prevent their having seen at least two lustres, which had detracted a trifle *du leur*,[1] as the bantering Marquis de Chemillé, their neighbor two leagues away, used to say in a witticism replete with novelty and taste.

The baronet, or rather, the Chevalier Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem, heir presumptive to the domains of Anguilhem, La Pintade, and La Guérite, that is to say, to sixty acres of tillable land, twenty acres of woodland, and an orchard planted out to cabbages, was entering upon his fifteenth year. He was a tall, handsome lad, who was able to course a hare very prettily upon his

[1] A play on the word *leur*, "them," and *leurre*, "lure," "decoy." —Tr.

own legs, and shot like Maître Lajeunesse, the keeper of the barony, with the reputation of killing nineteen snipe out of twenty. He rode bareback the wildest horses in the country, and for ten leagues around had the reputation of being a veritable centaur. Finally, from the day he was five years of age, the memorable time when the Baron Agénor had placed a little rapier in his hands, he had not a single day missed fencing for an hour or two with his father, who was one of the strongest blades of the province, although, thanks to his reputation, he had never had serious occasion to draw the sword; so that, advancing lesson by lesson, step by step, stroke by stroke, the tiny blade became a long rapier, the weak tendon a steel spring, the wavering arm a rod of iron, and the child a healthy fellow who could stand all day long at guard, the body resting on the left leg and the wrist on a level with the right breast, which was the first principle of the method of the day, and which, let us say in passing, was as good as another.

Beyond these acquired advantages, the chevalier possessed, as natural gifts, beautiful blonde hair, a height of five feet five inches with a promise of more, two blue eyes with frank, clear gaze, a pair of plump rosy cheeks on which a light down was beginning to show, and an admirably turned leg. Hence all the wives of the country squires around, taking advantage of the privilege yet granted them by his extreme youth, almost always smilingly greeted him either as their handsome Roger or their handsome Tancrède, according as their romantic fancies prompted them to choose for a hero the conqueror of Sicily or the lover of Clorinda.

So much for his physical characteristics; now let us turn to the mental.

This, the essential part of the education of a young man appointed to the glory of supporting and perpetuating the name of the Anguilhems, had been, from the day that a son was granted them by the goodness of God, the chief thought of both baron and baroness. Madame d'Anguilhem had given the child his first lessons in reading, writing, and ciphering. The curé of the neighboring village had taught him how to decline nouns and conjugate verbs, but that was the limit of his own learning, and, with a frankness more creditable to his honesty than to his education, he had confessed that he dared not push on his pupil to the seventh. The baron and the baroness were then very much embarrassed as to continuing the education of their son, from whom both were resolved not to be separated at his tender age, when one of their friends informed them that a certain Abbé Dubuquoi, who had just completed the education of one of the richest heirs of Loches, was looking for another pupil to perfect. This was precisely what the baron and baroness desired. Rigid inquiries were made, all of which proved favorable to the tutor; so that the Abbé Dubuquoi was installed at the château with a salary of one hundred and fifty francs, his board, and the pompous title of preceptor of the Chevalier d'Anguilhem.

Now let us say a few words concerning the château inhabited by the four personages whom we have just passed in review, one of whom, we will no longer keep secret from our readers, is destined to become the principal hero of this story. As may be divined, we refer to the youth whom, as we have said, the ladies were in the habit of designating as "handsome Tancrède" or "handsome Roger."

This château was not exactly a château; it is true that

it was not simply a house. By no means. It was a building which held a middle place between these two structures, and which might have passed for a handsome farmhouse. This farmhouse — we adopt the last name, with all respect to its noble occupants — contained eight rooms in the lower part. These rooms consisted of a dairy dignified by the name of armory hall, a dining-room, a salon adorned by three ancient portraits, scarcely recognizable, and a modern one representing an officer of the king's navy in a captain's uniform. We shall return to this portrait. There was a guard-room without guards, but ornamented with five suits of armor which belonged to the time when there were guards; this had become the living-room, and here the family assembled. There were four sleeping-rooms. The kitchen and its accessories situated underground, and the cellars under the kitchen, ran the whole length of these eight apartments. Finally, at one of the four corners of the structure rose a tower of a dozen metres in height, which was called La Guérite. Monsieur le Baron Agénor d'Anguilhem slept in the tower, and it was especially upon this tower that he based his pretension to christen the manor-house with the pompous name of château, a title, moreover, which, whether from habit or politeness, was generally accorded it in the country, and which we alone have the bad grace to contest.

This château was not one of the richest in the neighborhood. The Baron d'Anguilhem collected from the farmers to whom his dependencies were rented the sum of twelve hundred francs. Now, since in the country every one's income is known to every one else, one must be resigned either to appearing as a gentleman of small means or to lying.

The baron lied remorselessly. He professed to

derive an income of one hundred louis from the war funds and another hundred from the king's privy purse. However, we will not venture to swear that he affirmed it; but he caused it to be said and would have had it believed. Yet it was with this as with the disaffection of which we have but just spoken. No one was deceived about his income of two hundred louis, hence the Chevalier Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem did not pass in the province for a great catch.

This, however, as can readily be understood, troubled the young man very little. He was tall, he was strong. If he lacked horses of his own, those of his neighbors were at his service. He had magnificent hunting; for, by tacit agreement, each of these worthy gentlemen, too restricted in territory had he been obliged to keep within the boundaries of his own lands, was enabled to hunt over the grounds of all. He construed his Cornelius Nepos at sight, and, having as yet no wants, experienced no poverty.

In truth, what did he lack? He had a tutor whom he did not exactly hate, but whom he nevertheless regarded as a great superfluity. On returning from the hunt, thanks to the baroness' maternal foresight, he always found a generous meal, whose fragments he gave to his dog. And then, after that repast, a bed awaited him, where he could, if so minded, sleep twelve hours at a stretch. Here was wealth, or I am greatly deceived.

When Roger Tancrède left the château, whether on horseback or afoot, with a gun on his shoulder, or with the Abbé Dubuquoi on his arm, the peasants working in the fields turned around to salute him, and the young gentlemen of the neighborhood paused to shake hands. This is the height of the power to which a simple heart

and a philosophical mind can aspire, or I know nothing about it.

When they entertained at the château, Roger set to work, exactly like the two servants who comprised the entire domestic service of the house. He it was who polished up the massive old silver plate bearing the family coat of arms, and helped the baroness prepare the pastry, which, like a châtelaine of the middle ages, she did not scorn to make with her own hands. More than that, since he was skilful as well as strong, he was especially charged with wiping certain Japanese porcelain which had been preserved as relics through three generations. As soon as the guests arrived, Roger Tancrède put on his best coat, which always dated back two or three years at least, passed a comb through his beautiful hair, which curled naturally, and gave his hand to the ladies.

The baron and the baroness often thought of their dear son's future, and more than once had husband and wife reviewed all the callings open to him. The father favored a military career; but the baroness had pointed out to her husband that unless he were resigned to burying the name of the d'Anguilhems in the lowest ranks of the army, there was no hope to look for in that quarter, since the future hero was not rich enough to maintain a regiment. There were indeed some exceptional cases where the king had solved the difficulty by presenting a colonel's commission and adding a gratuity of one hundred thousand crowns to the commission; but Louis XIV. had bestowed so many favors of the sort that he had declared it to be impossible for him to bestow more except on very rare occasions. Now, the king had no motive for setting aside this wise determination in favor of the Chevalier Roger Tancrède. All this is

what the baroness said aloud to her husband, when the latter broached the subject in conversation. What she said to herself was that she did not wish her poor child to be a soldier, since the last of the d'Anguilhems might very easily, like any simple peasant, get a thrust from a halberd in Flanders, or a shot from a musket on the banks of the Rhine, as frequently happened among gentlemen whose rank did not keep them on the coast.

The baron then suggested a good position in finance. Financiering even at that period was a business that might be engaged in without great derogation of dignity. But how could he secure this position which it would cost twice as much to buy as a regiment, since a regiment brought its colonel only honor and blows, while a bank position yielded its incumbent good round louis d'or? He must renounce, therefore, that career restricted to the favorites of Madame de Maintenon, Père Lachaise, and Monsieur de Maine. Now, the Baron d'Anguilhem, honest and straightforward country gentleman that he was, cordially detested the old woman, the Jesuit, and the bastards. Hence there was no great chance in that direction, and the baroness herself, however strong her desire to see her well-beloved son occupy a position that would in nowise endanger his length of days, was forced to admit with a sigh and a shake of the head that it would be arrant folly to cling to such a project.

The baron would then revert to a favorite notion with which he deluded himself in his hours of reverie. This was to make a naval officer of his son. The navy offered a noble career, and one in every particular worthy of a gentleman. Louis XIV. had made France a maritime power which was beginning to counteract England's influence and that of Holland, those two queens of the

ocean whom he had more than once succeeded in humbling, the one by means of the other, while exalting himself at the expense of both; but at this point especially, the baron encountered very lively opposition from his wife. If she had dreaded a soldier's life for her son, she had greater reason to fear that of a sailor, who had every day to combat not only the strength of men, but every caprice of the elements. Once only at the beginning of their married life had the baron and the baroness visited a seaport.

They were at Brest, and, while taking a sail, met with a squall so violent that the bark which carried them came near upsetting a hundred times, and it was only by a miracle of heaven that she regained port.

From that date, Madame d'Anguilhem, who, in reality, was possessed of as many nerves as a Parisian marquise, country woman though she was, could not bear to hear the sea spoken of. She had constant visions of her poor chevalier threatened by flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, tossed by the winds and threatened by the waves, about to be swallowed up in the depths of that liquid abyss whose prophetic voice had forewarned her; consequently, when the baron broached the subject after a thousand circumlocutions, the baroness began to shriek, and asked her husband whether, as a recompense for her exemplary conduct toward him, he intended to kill her with grief.

Then the baron, who was an excellent man, would in turn sigh profoundly and murmur, —

"Madame, madame, you are not worthy of your name of Cornelia!"

To which the baroness would reply, —

"Monsieur, we are not living in the days of the Gracchi, nor am I a Roman matron."

In truth, the poor woman was merely a good, tender, excellent mother, which was, perhaps, of less consequence in the eyes of the philosophers, but which in the sight of God was certainly worth quite as much. They fell back then into a lasting indecision with regard to the career of the Chevalier Roger Tancrède to whom, meanwhile, they gave the best possible education, although they could see nothing in the future outlook for him but to be, like monsieur his father, a country gentleman with an income of four hundred crowns. It was a sad affair.

Yet, from the depths of this clouded sky there fitfully peeped a little star which, from time to time, flashed upon the Anguilhems the ephemeral rays of its intermittent light. This fostering star was an inheritance, possible, at least, if not probable. It was the fortune of a distant cousin, a chevalier by the king's grace, a retired captain of a frigate, an old sea-dog, having cruised under Jean Bart, and calling himself by his own name, the Vicomte de Bouzenois.

That modern portrait which hung among the old family portraits in the salon was his.

Occasionally at the château, they talked of this contemporaneous celebrity whose image had come to shed its brilliancy upon those of past celebrities, but they spoke of him with singular reticence. The fact is, his fortune was so great and their hopes so precarious that they regarded any plans which they might found upon it as castles in Spain, chimeras, and dreams. They dared not, then, think seriously of that inheritance, and they were right; but, on occasion, they would remark with certain pride,—

"We have a relative at Versailles, Monsieur de Bouzenois, captain of one of the king's vessels."

Then, pointing to the picture, they would add,—

"There is a portrait of him in full uniform."

Now, all thoughts of the navy which the Baron d'Anguilhem had entertained and which we have disclosed to our readers, had come to him in front of that portrait and had been inspired by that very fortunate relationship.

"After all," the baron told himself, "the Vicomte de Bouzenois is my distant cousin. I myself am the only relative remaining to him, so that if he were to die intestate I should be his heir; therefore, if I were to ask him for a recommendation in favor of the Chevalier Roger Tancrède, he could not refuse. Now a recommendation from the captain of a frigate would open a naval career for my son, and, that career once open, who knows where the chevalier will stop?"

These ideas of the baron's were strengthened by the mysterious life of the Vicomte de Bouzenois. Very peculiar stories were circulated as to the source of the colossal fortune that dazzled the eyes of the entire family. Nevertheless, among these stories was one that was considered very probable, and here it is:—

The Vicomte de Bouzenois had at the age of sixteen embarked on the French frigate Thetis. He had first achieved glory by cannonading alternately the English and the Dutch; then, finally, during the second war with Flanders, he had himself armed the brig Porpoise, and attacked the vessels of the English company coming from Chandernagor, and those of the Dutch Company on their way from Batavia, which services had procured him, in addition to a considerable share of the profits, the rank of captain of the very frigate Thetis on which he had formerly embarked. At last the treaty of Nimeguen was signed, and Monsieur

le Vicomte de Bouzenois, as a reward for his good and loyal services, had been appointed governor of a little colony that we then possessed on the Malabar coast.

You know the custom of the wives of the country aforesaid. Our confrère Lemierre who died without having been able to understand why the minister of the navy had not granted him a pension of six thousand livres in recognition of the famous line,

"Neptune's trident rules the world,"—

our confrère Lemierre, I repeat, has celebrated the custom in a drama of immortal dulness. Now, this custom which, thanks to the philanthropic surveillance of the English, is beginning to fall into disuse, was at that time in full force. It one day happened then that one of the richest and most powerful of the Malabar princes died, and, according to custom, his wife, not yet twenty years old, and as beautiful as the day, announced her fixed purpose of self-immolation upon his pyre.

Monsieur de Bouzenois, who was at that time barely thirty-five years of age, and therefore still young, — Monsieur de Bouzenois, we say, was apprised of her design. As the ex-captain of the frigate Thetis had, while the husband was living, more than once cast glances of admiration at her who was to-day a widow, he resolved, if the thing were possible, to prevent the sacrifice which was at hand, and with that intention he repaired to the house of the deceased, where he found the charming widow arraying herself in her most beautiful vestments, perfuming herself with the sweetest odors, beautifying herself, in short, for death, as another would bedeck herself for a fête. He then explained to her the motive of his visit, assuring her that it was a crime

thus unregrettingly to quit life, when a single glance from her could render life so precious to others. He reminded her that, besides being a widow, she was a mother, and that she belonged quite as sacredly to her living son as to her dead husband. In short, he was gallant, tender, eloquent, pathetic, but all in vain. The victim admitted that she was somewhat sorry to quit so young the existence upon which she had barely entered; but she nevertheless persisted in her determination, although it was evident, amidst her obstinate refusals, that she was sacrificing herself less to her love for the dead than to the prejudice of the living, declaring at last, by Vishnu, Siva, and Brahma that she would be forever disgraced if she were weak enough to evade the general custom. It was clear to the eyes of the Vicomte de Bouzenois that the poor widow had no deep predilection for the flames, but was doing the thing because the thing was to be done, because it was the custom, because it was the fashion, in short, and because at any cost, in every country in the world, a woman is bound to follow the fashion.

Thereupon, his mind was made up. He allowed the entire ceremony to proceed, as if it were to be consummated. Then, just as the beautiful widow was bidding adieu to her family, he drew his sword, gave the signal to a group of twenty soldiers whom he had drawn up in line around the funeral pile under the pretext of adding to the solemnity of the scene, and, while a part of the little band scattered the straw, fagots, and other combustible materials, with the other part he carried away the beautiful widow and bore her off to the government palace.

We know not what line of argument the Vicomte de Bouzenois there pursued with the Malabar Venus.

But we do know that by the morrow she had not only renounced the funeral pyre, but she also appeared quite consoled for not having died.

A year later Monsieur de Bouzenois married the widow; and each, it is said, made at marriage a gift of their worldly effects to the survivor. Now the survivor at this date was the Vicomte de Bouzenois, who, as we have before said, thanks to the rupees of the dead beauty, added to his own piastres, possessed the fortune of a nabob.

And, too, in the event of the Vicomte de Bouzenois' dying intestate, the entire fortune would revert to the d'Anguilhems, his nearest relatives, the son of the Malabar woman having, in all probability, been provided for at the time of his mother's marriage.

However, this possibility was too entirely a matter of chance for the family to take it in any way into consideration in their plans for the future of the Chevalier Roger Tancrède.

But, during those long winter evenings when, gathered around a large fireplace, sometimes at one house, sometimes at another, the gentlemen of the neighborhood of the Château d'Anguilhem were rehearsing the exploits of their ancestors or the achievements of their allies, Monsieur de Chemillé, whose great-uncle had been a colonel, talked of the cavalry; Monsieur de Birgarou, whose cousin was a god-daughter of Vauban, talked of sieges; Monsieur Gantry, whose brother-in-law was an excise officer, talked of the revenue, and the Abbé Dubuquoi talked of the Church.

As for the Baron Agénor Palamède d'Anguilhem, thanks to his kinship with the Vicomte de Bouzenois, in the congress where every branch had its proxy, he represented the navy. However, the heroic and the

amorous adventures of the frigate captain shed some lustre upon his relatives at Loches. Glory is not a very productive appanage, as every one knows; but when it comes in default of anything else, it is at least better than nothing.

II.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM WHOM SOME OF THE DAMES OF LOCHES AND ITS VICINITY CALLED HANDSOME ROGER, OTHERS HANDSOME TANCRÈDE, DISCOVERED THAT HE HAD A HEART.

Thus the days — and by the days the nights are understood — rolled on with this good family, without their having settled anything about the future career of the heir, who, during this period of indecision, had attained his fifteenth year, taking things as they came, hunting and riding because it was pleasant, working in his unoccupied moments, pretending that the open air conduced greatly to the development of his thoughts, and, when he was in the open air, thinking little but whistling much.

What is more, the Chevalier Roger Tancrède, who was the terror of hares and deer, had never yet even thought of pursuing a shepherdess. He had received, it is true, a great fund of sensibility from his mother, but at Anguilhem nothing had as yet developed the germs. Much exercise, a few novels, and almost no opportunities for falling in love comprised his mode of life.

However, one opportunity presented itself. Let us relate how eagerly the Chevalier Roger Tancrède seized it by the forelock.

The baron and the baroness gave a grand supper at Easter. In those days, Easter was an occasion for reunions, and all the nobility of the neighborhood for

six leagues around was bidden to the Château d'Anguilhem. After having performed for his mother the usual services pertaining to his department, and which we have already detailed, the Chevalier Roger Tancrède made a conspicuous toilet and entered the salon where the guests were already assembled.

The conversation turned upon the wood-cutting, the recent sowing, the next hunt; and, as these three topics were essentially interesting to country gentlemen, not very much attention was paid to the prolonged belatedness of one of the guests; and that guest was the Vicomte de Beuzerie, known throughout the entire province for being so punctual that his punctuality had become proverbial. Yet, as eight o'clock had just struck, and the invitations had fixed the dinner hour at half-past seven precisely, the stomachs began to protest, and their owners at the same time asked each other in low tones what could have become of the delinquent.

The question was the less unseemly, since from the moment the appointed hour had struck, the baron was seen anxiously watching the progress of the clock, and the baroness, having been called two or three times to the door of the salon to know if the dinner should not be served, had answered aloud, —

"Have a little patience, Catherine. Monsieur de Beuzerie cannot now be long in coming."

The clock pointed to a quarter past eight; evidently, only an accident could have delayed Monsieur de Beuzerie. Hence the Baroness d'Anguilhem began to feel greatly concerned about the viscountess, with whom she was rather friendly, and her daughter Mademoiselle Constance, who had returned from the convent to spend Easter week with her family, and who was to accompany her esteemed parents to Anguilhem.

The baron therefore directed the Chevalier Roger Tancrède to saddle Christopher and reconnoitre the road toward Beuzerie. If the young man returned in an hour without having discovered anything, they would sit down to the table, whatever might come of it.

Roger Tancrède accepted the mission without urging. He was one of those light-hearted lads that are always ready for anything. He buttoned on a pair of long gaiters over his silk hose, saddled Christopher, who was a good animal of three or four years, jumped on his back, gathered up the reins, and, thanks to a holly switch with which he had supplied himself, and which was to take the place of the missing spurs, he succeeded in urging the peaceful creature into a gallop.

The night was fine enough for a poet. The pale moon, buried in great, cushiony clouds, the sharp north wind whistling through the yet leafless branches, the hooting of the night birds, all would have delighted René, Werther, or Hamlet; but Roger was little moved by these nocturnal influences; besides, Roger was very hungry, and when Roger was hungry there was not much under the sun, with the exception of a well-laden table, that he judged worthy of attention. And so he fumed as he galloped along, wishing unpunctual people at the devil, certain that, owing to the delay, the ragouts would stick to the saucepans, and the filet would be burned, and that the entire blame was due to Mademoiselle de Beuzerie, who, doubtless, was keeping her parents waiting while she perfected her toilet. And, indulging in these reflections, the young messenger kept lashing Christopher who, accustomed even with the chevalier to a more moderate gait, galloped harder than ever, spouting steam from his nostrils like the phantom steed of the lover of Lenore.

But, although Roger Tancrède continued to advance, he still saw nothing save the shadows of the clouds as they floated across the moon and, for the moment, obscured his path as with a dark veil. He stopped to listen from time to time, and heard only the rushing of the wind through the trees; then, with a sigh, he would turn his head toward Anguilhem, where he could see in the distance through the branches the brilliantly lighted windows of the château. At that sight, he felt sorely tempted to draw rein and return, saying that he had seen nothing; but he reflected that it was not even ten minutes since he had started out, and that his father had told him to search for an hour. Thereupon he again plucked up courage, and again whipped up Christopher and set off at a gallop, to the great amazement of the poor beast who, ordinarily serving as the baron's mount, was with him in the habit of taking a gait that was infinitely more sedate.

Suddenly Roger thought he heard a cry of distress two or three hundred paces in advance; at the cry, the horse stopped of his own accord, sniffing the air noisily with his smoking nostrils. The chevalier looked about him. He was in a hollow, lonely and boggy, on a narrow roadway beside some deep clay-pits. The cry was dismal, the night uncanny; Roger shuddered.

However, we must say to the credit of the heir of the name and title of d'Anguilhem, the sentiment of fear experienced by the chevalier was short-lived, and was instantly gone upon the reflection that he must be of service to those who had uttered that appeal for help. He again urged Christopher into a gallop, shouting at the top of his voice, —

"Ho! where are you? who called?"

"This way, this way!" answered a voice, nearer than

before, and seeming to issue from the depths of the earth.

"On which side?" demanded Roger, still advancing.

"To the left of the road, in the marl-pit; this way farther, — here, just under where you now are."

Roger pulled up Christopher and peered through the darkness which had become thicker from the disappearance of the moon behind the clouds. He thought he could descry something moving fifteen feet below him.

"Can it be you, Monsieur de Beuzerie?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, it is I, chevalier," returned the voice, "in heaven's name get us out of this. Our carriage went over in going too near the edge, and we are sunken in the marl."

"Help, Monsieur Roger!" cried a woman's voice.

"Help!" repeated the voice of a girl.

"Ah! poor Monsieur de Beuzerie!" cried Roger; "wait, wait, I will come."

And he leaped down from Christopher. Then he heard a frightful ado, which the trampling of his own horse had until then prevented his hearing, and which, upon Christopher's halt, now distinctly reached his ear. A horse was splashing about in the muddy water of the pit into which he was plunged up to the stomach. The old coach, as Monsieur de Beuzerie said, had slipped from the road-way down the embankment and fallen quite flat; but, thanks to the depth of the box and the softness of the mud, the fall had injured no one.

Madame de Beuzerie had at first thought proper to faint away, but at Roger's voice, she had come to herself again. As for her daughter Constance, she had borne the fall with great courage. Of course Monsieur de Beuzerie, who was unhurt, had entertained fears only for his wife and daughter.

Believing no time was to be lost, the Chevalier Roger Tancrède slid down the declivity until he reached the coach. He then called on the coachman to come to his assistance; but the coachman had gone in search of help in the neighborhood, and he called in vain. The young man then resolved alone to extricate Monsieur, Madame, and Mademoiselle de Beuzerie; the merit would be the greater. Consequently, he began by opening the door and releasing Mademoiselle Constance de Beuzerie, whom her mother held out to him like the mother who, in the picture of the flood, holds her child above the waters. Roger took Mademoiselle de Beuzerie and deposited her upon the bank as easily as if she had been a bird. Then came the turn of the viscountess; this was a more difficult matter. The viscountess was what in the provinces is styled a fine woman, that is, she was a plump matron, very attractive still, of five feet one inch in height, fat in proportion, weighing, perhaps, one hundred and sixty or one hundred and seventy pounds. However, mustering all his strength, Roger succeeded in pulling her up, while the viscount aided from below, and, in a few seconds, he had her deposited safe and sound beside her daughter.

There remained Monsieur de Beuzerie, who was far from presenting the same difficulties as his wife. A tall, spare man, still lusty and active, he was out of his coach in a twinkling, and, without Roger's help, sprang up the bank, where he joined the rest of his family.

Roger, for whom there was nothing more to do at the coach, immediately followed Monsieur de Beuzerie, with whom he exchanged many compliments, while the two ladies overwhelmed him with thanks and courtesies.

And still the coachman had not returned. They called him in vain; their shouts were wasted on soli-

tude, and only the screech-owls and the hoot-owls answered, as if in mockery of the poor travellers.

Roger, whose stomach grew more and more famished, increasing his impatience, suggested that they should not wait for the coachman, who in all likelihood would return quite alone; and he began to unhitch the mired horse, which, in a trice, was on the bank only a few steps distant from his masters.

The only question now was how to reach the château. This matter, which at first sight appeared very simple, was, in reality, complicated by circumstances, as we shall see. There were two horses for accomplishing the undertaking; as for the coach, it was not to be thought of. It would take seven or eight men to set it, not to say, on its feet, but on its wheels. There were, then, two horses, we repeat; but one of the two was covered with mud. Roger first proposed to Monsieur de Beuzerie that he himself should lead Christopher by the bridle, while the viscountess and her daughter should mount his back, and that Monsieur de Beuzerie should bestride his own horse. But Christopher, still quite excited by his race, whinneying and pawing the earth, seemed to the two ladies to be a little too restive, and the proposition was rejected.

Roger next suggested riding with Madame de Beuzerie upon Christopher, for whom he would answer when he himself was on his back, while the viscount and his daughter should ride the other horse. But, as we have said, the other horse was covered with mud, and the viscountess whispered to her husband that if that plan were adopted, Constance would spoil her lovely new gown of pekin. Hence that plan was rejected like the first.

Finally it was decided that Madame de Beuzerie,

having less at stake on account of her gown than Mademoiselle Constance, should with her husband mount the coach horse, upon whose back they placed Christopher's saddle, while the Chevalier Roger Tancrède, who was a perfect horseman, should mount Christopher bareback and take Mademoiselle Constance up behind him.

They proceeded to put into execution this plan which was yet to receive a slight modification. Monsieur de Beuzerie mounted the horse first; then Roger lifted Madame de Beuzerie and established her in majesty behind her spouse. Thus far, all worked like a charm; but, having reached this point, the remainder of the plan presented a little difficulty.

If Roger Tancrède got on the horse first, Mademoiselle Constance would in that case have no one to help her mount behind him; while, on the other hand, if the Chevalier Roger Tancrède first placed Mademoiselle Constance behind, then he in turn could not mount the horse except by executing some extravagant gymnastic feat, throwing his leg over Christopher's head instead of his tail. They searched on all sides for a bank, a mile-stone, a fallen tree; there was nothing. At last, his famished stomach spurring him on, the Chevalier Roger Tancrède devised a plan: it was that he should mount behind Mademoiselle Constance, whom he would then clasp in his arms instead of being clasped in hers. Such a course was doubtless somewhat unconventional, and at the proposition the father and mother both knit their brows; but the viscountess inclined to the viscount's ear and whispered, —

"Never mind, my dear! it must be done, and, after all, they are but two children."

"Mount, then, as you will," said Monsieur de Beuzerie, "for indeed we must proceed."

"Mademoiselle, allow me?" said Roger.

And like a feather he lifted up the slight little sylph called Mademoiselle Constance, and was almost as soon on the crupper behind her.

Mademoiselle Constance uttered a pretty little shriek, very terrified, but not very terrifying, to which the viscount, full of parental and prudish fears, responded with, "What is the matter?"

"Nothing, monsieur, nothing," returned Roger. "Just as I sprang up, mademoiselle lost her balance; now I have her in my arms and there is no danger."

"In your arms, *morbleu!* your arms!" muttered the viscount.

"Hush, my dear," remonstrated the viscountess, "you will put ideas into the children's heads that certainly are not there now."

"Let us say no more," said the viscount.

And he applied his heels to such purpose that his horse set off at a gentle trot. Christopher followed on behind.

However, let us hasten to say that the viscount's fears, if exaggerated, were not without foundation. Scarcely had the Chevalier Tancrède felt Mademoiselle Constance leaning against his heart, before his heart began to throb as it had never yet throbbed. For her part, the young girl, who, reared in a convent until then, was riding a horse for the first time, trembled with fear, and, whether she herself was experiencing an unknown pleasure, or whether, indeed, in her primitive innocence fear really triumphed over conventionalism, she clasped to her breast the hand with which the young man was holding her, turning from time to time to appeal to him, —

"Oh! Monsieur le Chevalier, hold me more firmly,

more firmly still! Oh! Monsieur le Chevalier, I am so afraid! Oh! Monsieur le Chevalier, I am going to fall — "

And every time that she turned, her fair locks brushed the young man's face, her beautiful eyes met his, her sweet breath mingled with his, with the result that poor Roger forgot his increasing hunger, and he would have had the journey last forever, he felt such a strange sense of comfort, such unknown pleasure, such inexplicable delight stealing through all his being, such expansion of bosom. Every sighing tree, every moonbeam as it gently caressed him seemed breathing in his ear, " Are you not happy, Roger? "

Yes, the chevalier was happy, and, without knowing why, Mademoiselle Constance also was happy. In her fear there was a charming little intermixture of pleasure for which she did not account, although she told herself that she had never been so agreeably frightened, and that fear was a sensation full of delicious emotions, in short, a misjudged thing until then, and, consequently, calumniated like all misjudged things.

It was while enjoying this happiness, ill-defined in their minds but profoundly appreciated in their hearts, that the two young people reached the Château d'Anguilhem. The horses' hoofs had been heard by all the guests. A famished stomach has no ears, it is said. Strange mistake! A famished stomach is, on the contrary, all ears, and very sharp ears at that. Everybody ran out to the steps, and the viscount, the viscountess, Mademoiselle Constance, and Roger were received with a blaze of torches, not unlike sovereigns returning to their own dominions, and for whom the royal residence has been illuminated.

The baron extended his arms to the viscountess, who,

thanks to their support, decorously reached the ground. The viscount solemnly dismounted as if to beat of drum, as a horseman ought to dismount. As for Roger, he made but one bound, took Mademoiselle Constance under the arms with both hands, lifted her like a feather, and set her gently on the ground, so gently that not even a sound was heard as the girl's two little feet met the flags. Then it was, by the light of the torches, that Roger first had a good look at Constance, whom thus far he had but guessed at. What of Constance? Ravishing blue eyes, blonde hair that looked like fluffs of silk, a mouth like a cherry, a neck like a swan's, a sylph-like form, — such was Mademoiselle de Beuzerie. A cloud of flame swept before Roger's eyes, and he felt as if he should die of joy.

Without daring to offer his hand, he followed Mademoiselle Constance, who, as soon as she was free from Christopher, had blushingly executed a pretty convent courtesy before her cavalier and gone with her mother; but, strange to say, already his heart, so happy and full a moment ago, was seized with a stricture. It seemed as if the young girl were lost to him. And Roger, poor Roger, the young man whose robust appetite had become proverbial, sat down to the table without the least desire to eat.

However, a great triumph awaited Roger. Their clamorous hunger had immediately assembled the guests in the dining-room; but the first course was barely removed before conversation, in subjection, at first, to their appetites, began to rise in the shape of interrogations. They asked the cause of Monsieur de Beuzerie's delay, and inquired why that worthy gentleman, who should have come in his carriage, had arrived on horseback instead.

Then Monsieur de Beuzerie detailed the whole adventure, presented the Chevalier Roger Tancrède as his rescuer, extolled his zeal and the judgment displayed by him, notwithstanding his youth. The eulogies of Madame de Beuzerie surpassed those of her husband. Mademoiselle Constance alone said nothing, but she blushed furiously and cast a shy glance at Roger. Roger, who had not for an instant taken his eyes from her, remarked the blush and intercepted the glance; and, without knowing why, he felt that look and blush did him good. No other subject was discussed during the dinner, and by dessert, the Chevalier Roger Tancrède was regarded by the guests as the deliverer of the whole family in general, and of Mademoiselle Constance in particular.

Mademoiselle Constance and the Chevalier Roger Tancrède were therefore fêted as the two prodigies of the evening, and fêted in the manner of that happy time of politeness and good fellowship. Indeed, in those days, it seemed as if all wished to make life smooth and pleasant for the novices who were just setting foot upon society's threshold. Women made advances to the school-boy still in the hands of his tutor. Men strove to please heiresses yet captive behind the gratings of their convents. They came from school-room or college, the young men to talk of love, and the maidens to hear it talked of.

Those were happy days, when the lads had not yet taken it into their heads to talk politics while spinning their tops, and girls did not dream of discussing ethics while dressing and undressing their dolls.

In the depths of his heart, Monsieur d'Anguilhem was delighted at the importance with which the adventure of the marsh was investing his son. Above all, in

his plans for the future, the baron was seeking an establishment for his son, and Mademoiselle Constance, who at the death of her father and mother would inherit an income of six thousand francs, was in every way a suitable match for the chevalier. Beuzerie and Anguilhem could then be united by purchasing three or four leagues of marsh which could be had for little, delightful hunting-grounds, but which were otherwise perfectly useless, and two or three small pieces of woodland lying between them here and there; and all together would form one of the noblest baronies of Touraine. The children born of that marriage would thus own valley and mountain as their ancestors had owned them at the height of their prosperity. That would be a fine thing; it would be grand, magnificent. The worthy baron was in high good humor throughout the meal, and he sang at dessert.

But, very different from the baron, and as if he must have divined the plans of that ambitious father, Monsieur de Beuzerie, who had at first seated himself at the table with an air of imposing dignity, drew himself up more and more as the dinner neared its close, signing to his wife that she, too, should assume the defensive, a manœuvre which the vicountess executed, it should be added, with a conjugal understanding worthy of the highest eulogy. More than that: as the young people had been placed side by side, and as, instead of eating as became children of from twelve to fifteen years, they talked in the low tones that lovers might have used, Monsieur and Madame de Beuzerie overwhelmed their daughter with threatening glances, to which at first Constance paid no attention, occupied as she was with something else; but they at last took effect, throwing the girl into a state of anguish, the more

poignant owing to her utter ignorance of the cause of her parents' wrath.

And so, no sooner were they risen from table than Madame de Beuzerie took her daughter by the hand and made her sit beside her, while Monsieur de Beuzerie, after announcing that he wished to get home the same night, set out to learn something about his coach.

Monsieur de Beuzerie came back in despair. His coachman had returned dead-drunk, and the coach was still daintily embedded in the marsh; then, as politeness very naturally demanded, the baron and the baroness offered their neighbors a room in the château. But this proposition, which, moreover, was nothing unusual, Monsieur de Beuzerie so promptly negatived that the baron was forced to pass on to another suggestion. This was to put the viscount's horse to the baron's cart; by this means, Monsieur, Madame, and Mademoiselle de Beuzerie could regain their own château that evening, as they seemed so desirous of doing. The next morning, Monsieur d'Anguilhem's people would extricate the coach from the marsh, hitch Christopher to it, and Christopher should take the coach to Beuzerie and bring back the cart.

This plan was enthusiastically approved by the viscountess and the viscount, to the great despair of Mademoiselle Constance and the Chevalier Roger Tancrède, between whom a poor little tearful glance was exchanged for a stifled sigh, an interchange which, happily, was not surprised by the girl's inflexible parents. A quarter of an hour after the matter had been decided, it was announced that the viscount's horse had been put to the baron's cart.

They must go then. The poor children had seen each other two hours ago for the first time, but it seemed to

them that they had known each other from infancy. The baron and the viscount shook hands; Madame d'Anguilhem and Madame de Beuzerie embraced; Constance made a beautiful courtesy to all the company, and cast a very sorrowful glance at the Chevalier Roger Tancrède. Then all three got into the cart, the horse set off, and then followed the diminishing sound of wheels and bells, and soon the sound died quite away.

Roger did not return to the salon with the rest of the company. Roger had remained at the threshold of the house-door; from the threshold of the house-door he had run to the court-gate, and there he had stood, sad and motionless, his eyes fixed on the vanishing cart, in which direction he kept on gazing even long after it had disappeared from sight. Doubtless he would have been found there the next morning had he not felt a touch upon his shoulder. It was his tutor, Abbé Dubuquoi, who came to say that a longer absence from the salon would be considered rude by the remaining guests. Roger furtively brushed away two great tears that were falling from his eyes, and followed his instructor.

III.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM, DISCOVERING THAT HE HAD A HEART, WISHED TO BE ASSURED THAT MADEMOISELLE DE BEUZERIE ALSO HAD ONE.

It was lucky for the Chevalier Tancrède that they did not keep late hours in those days at Easter. At midnight all the guests dispersed, some, and they were the nearest neighbors, to return to their manors, either afoot or on horseback; others, who lived at a distance, to retire to the apartments which, in the fulness of their ancient hospitality, the baron and the baroness had placed at their disposal.

Before ascending to his bed-chamber, Roger went as usual to embrace his father and his mother, who exchanged smiles; then he bowed to the abbé and in turn retired, but not to sleep. He felt not the least inclined toward sleep; sleep had abandoned him like his appetite; he but thought of Mademoiselle de Beuzerie.

It was the first time that the chevalier had given thought to anything but a hunting party, or a horse-race, or a fencing-match, or an ingenious subterfuge for getting off from a recitation of his Sallust or Virgil.

Roger was profoundly sad. He had comprehended that the only aim of that hurried departure had been to take Constance away from him; but he had read in the young maid's eyes that she would have been very glad to remain near him, and it comforted him. Besides, there is something which weighs upon the heart so sweetly

in the early sorrows of a first love, that they are accepted as sensations greatly to be preferred to the indifference that has given place to them. What we desire above all things is not exactly to be happy, — we do not know yet what happiness is, — but to avoid a return to that arid desert whence we have come, to remain in the soft sunlight under the beautiful green trees, among the intoxicating odors of the flowers, whose thorns have already lacerated our fingers; but, for all that, how we love to pluck them, whatever the risk, how essential to breathe their perfume! We prefer tempest to calm, suffering to lack of joy.

Roger went to sleep late, and he slept feverishly, which did not interfere with his waking at daybreak, refreshed, rested, and bright-eyed. What is more, he had planned a little scheme of his own. He would himself take back the coach with Christopher under pretext of asking in the name of his father and mother after the Beuzerie family, to whom, in view of the advanced hour of the night when they had left the château, the baron and the baroness might be supposed to fear that some accident had happened. In addition, he had conceived an idea that rendered such a course quite natural. He would give the coachman a crown to counterfeit illness and declare that he did not feel equal to going to Beuzerie.

The chevalier, who knew where the coach was, directed the gamekeeper and the stable-boy, and these, with the help of the gardener, the farmer, and three or four of his plough-boys, succeeded by means of ropes and strength of arms in hoisting the coach to the roadway. Happily, the solidity of the old coach preserved it from damage, and once righted, it made no objection to wheeling toward Beuzerie. As for Christopher, under

the stimulus of repeated cuts of the whip from his young master, he set off at a full trot, kicking and whinneying by way of protest that he failed to understand the manner in which he was driven since the night before.

But, as Roger drew near Beuzerie, his urgency, as regards Christopher, became less pressing, and, profiting by the cessation of blows, the intelligent animal came down from the full trot to a jog, and from the jog-trot to a walk. In fact, what had at first seemed a very simple thing to the young man, this matter of taking the viscount his coach and getting the paternal cart in exchange, now looked to him like monstrous audacity. He recalled Monsieur de Beuzerie's severity of countenance, his frown, his curt accents, and, more than all, his precipitate departure, and he asked himself whether the master of Beuzerie, who had been in such haste to leave the Château d'Anguilhem, would experience a high degree of pleasure on seeing the heir of that château at the Château de Beuzerie. All these reflections gave little assurance to the Chevalier Roger Tancrède, who, among the excellent qualities with which heaven had endowed him, had not received that happy impudence which is the card most sure to win; not only then had he ceased urging Christopher forward, but, what is more, had the horse stopped or turned round, it is probable that his master would not have had the courage to start him on again or turn him back; fortunately, this did not happen. Christopher was an honest creature incapable of such performances. He did not like to be overdriven, that is all, but, when left to decide for himself, he set to work with a provincial conscience, which could be relied on with perfect confidence. Hence he continued to plod on at his ordinary pace toward Beuzerie, and very soon Roger descried the little château's two

slate-roofed towers that lifted their creaking weather-vanes above the trees of the park.

Roger still continued to advance, but, it must be said, he was no longer forcing Christopher to go; it was Christopher that forced him. And so, on he went, overwhelmed with profoundest misgivings as to the reception with which he would meet, when, suddenly, at one of the tower windows there appeared a small blonde head looking in his direction with wide-open, beautiful blue eyes, while the hand that obeyed the head was waving a handkerchief as a token that the new-comer was recognized. At that sight Roger drew up Christopher, and the two beautiful children began to exchange all the signs of simple affection that their hearts, winging their way to each other, were able to suggest.

This had lasted for ten minutes, and probably would have lasted till night, had not Roger seen a second person rise behind Constance. The untimely interrupter was no other than Madame de Beuzerie, who, passing through the corridor and seeing her daughter, who had imprudently left the door of her room wide open, making unusual signals from the window, had been curious to know to whom the signals were directed. Madame de Beuzerie, who, on the evening before, had chided her husband for being too ready to take alarm, and for insisting upon their leaving the château so early, now recognized Roger, and began to think that the fancies which the viscount had taken into his head were not quite so silly as she had at first believed.

Being discovered, Roger saw that there was no drawing back; he brought the whip down upon Christopher, who, not expecting anything of the kind, set off at a

run, and entered the court of the Château de Beuzerie at a high rate of speed.

The first person that Roger saw was the viscount, who was returning from his morning walk in the park. Roger thought that the moment had arrived when he must pay for his audacity. He sprang to the ground, advanced toward Monsieur de Beuzerie, and announced very deliberately, for a man who was serving his apprenticeship in lying, that, his coachman having felt quite indisposed, he had taken it upon himself to bring the coach to Beuzerie, fearing, in the first place, that the viscount might have need of it, and secondly, desiring to learn, on behalf of the baron and the baroness, whether any accident had happened to their good neighbors when returning.

As these two motives were certainly most plausible, the viscount was forced to accept them, although he very clearly divined the true prompting of the young man's visit. He therefore feigned to believe implicitly all that the other had said, inquired in return after the health of the baron and the baroness, and as it was the dinner hour, and they were about to sit down to table, he even extended his courtesy so far as to invite his officious neighbor to share pot-luck. It is to be imagined that Roger gratefully accepted.

To put them to a second proof was what tempted the viscount to this step. He might, take it altogether, have been deceived the night before, and he wished to observe the two children again. Alas! the poor young hearts did not yet know how to feign. Upon entering the salon, Constance blushed as if she had been fifteen years old, and Roger turned as pale as if he had been eighteen. Monsieur de Beuzerie remarked upon the two young people an opposite effect, which however sprang

from the same source, and his wavering suspicions were fully established.

During the dinner Constance and Roger committed imprudence after imprudence; but on this occasion, instead of frowning, as on the previous evening, Monsieur de Beuzerie overlooked them, and contented himself with conveying to his wife signals which meant, —

"Well, was I such a visionary as you said? Is it clear now? is it clear?"

Indeed, it was so clear that at the end of dinner, in order to deprive Roger, doubtless, of all thought of revisiting the château, Monsieur de Beuzerie carelessly announced that Constance was returning that same afternoon to the convent. At this news, Constance uttered a cry, and Roger, seeing her turn so pale, and thinking that she was about to be ill, rushed toward her; but the viscount gently detained him with the remark that Madame de Beuzerie was present, and that, if her daughter was in need of assistance, she would give it to her.

But Constance was not at the fainting age. The poor little thing was too simple for that; she was contented to dissolve into tears, seeing which, Roger had need of all his self-possession to repress his own. Moreover, those untimely tears occasioned something very sad for the two children. Constance received orders to go to her room. Sobbing the while, she dropped a little courtesy to Roger, who acknowledged it by one of the most pathetic of bows; after which, as there was nothing more to detain him at the château, he begged to take leave of the viscount. One would have said that the viscount had foreseen that hurried departure, for, on arriving at the court-steps, Roger found Christopher there already harnessed to the cart. He thereupon saluted the viscount who shook hands with him most amiably, charged him

in turn with many compliments to the baron and the baroness, and completed his civilities by wishing him a pleasant drive.

As one can easily understand, Roger did not pass under the little window of the tower without an upward glance. Good luck willed that just then the viscountess, believing Roger to be still in the salon chanced to leave her daughter's room. Free for a moment, Constance had hastened to the window; she saw Roger. To the chevalier's great bewilderment, the maiden's face was radiant. The youth was about to ask of the beautiful child the cause of her unlooked for joy, when she exhibited a pencil and a bit of paper. Roger comprehended that Constance was about to write to him, and he stopped. In fact, after a moment's delay, both paper and pencil fell at his feet.

On the paper were these four lines: —

"Mamma, who is very fond of me, has just confessed that they said before you that I was to leave for the convent this afternoon so that you would not return here again. The truth is that I shall not go until next Sunday.

"CONSTANCE."

Since a pencil was thrown to him, Roger understood that he might respond; he tore off a scrap of the paper, and wrote in return: —

"Walk in the park to-morrow morning, near the arbor. I will come over the wall, and we will together plan some means of seeing each other again. I do not know whether you would feel such grief as I, but I do know that I shall die if I am kept away from you.

"ROGER."

Then he wrapped a pebble in this note, which, as we see, was somewhat precocious for a lover who was not

yet fifteen years of age; then, with a school-boy's precision of aim, he threw the pebble into Constance's room. Constance sprang back to pick it up, and reappeared skipping with joy, and nodding in assent that she would be at the rendezvous. To remain longer would have been imprudent; so, his heart inflated with happiness, Roger interrupted Christopher's meditations with a cut of the whip. Three hours later, the young man had returned to Anguilhem.

The baron and the baroness glanced at each other, and exchanged a smile on witnessing the joy that overflowed their son's heart and appeared at his eyes, in his speech, in his movements. Never had Roger been so obliging; he dried the china, polished the silver, cleaned the baron's gun, and recited to the Abbé Dubuquoi the entire episode of the love of Dido and Æneas.

The day dragged with Roger, but it seemed to him that by keeping himself in motion he might hasten the hours. He went, he came, here and there, upstairs and downstairs, looked at all the clocks, and hurried the supper as if he were hungry. He sat down to the table and ate nothing; and, with eyes more wide-awake than they had ever been, he retired to his room, saying that he was almost asleep.

As we well know, it was not because he was sleepy that Roger went to his room; he had to tell his love to the moon, to the breeze, the trees, the stars, the clouds. He opened his window and the monologue began.

Roger passed a happy night.

At daybreak Roger descended the stairs; no one in the château had yet risen. He called out to the housekeeper that he was going for a ride to Saint Hippolyte. That was in the direction opposite to Beuzerie. Poor

Roger thought himself obliged to lie, even to a servant. Then, having taken this precaution, which, at least, was evidence that indiscretion was not one of Roger's faults, the young man saddled Christopher and set off at full speed.

This time the poor animal attempted no resistance; besides, as a precautionary measure, Roger had re-enforced himself with a pair of spurs and a riding-whip. Christopher feeling the spurs, and having seen the riding-whip, had very quickly comprehended that, if he attempted to make any resistance, he would fare but ill.

Upon rising, the baron learned from the housekeeper that his son had gone for a ride to Saint Hippolyte. He did not believe a word of it, very naturally, nor did the baroness.

At eleven o'clock the Abbé Dubuquoi, who, from the time he had risen, had kept inquiring of every one for news of his pupil, went to inquire of his parents. The baron and the baroness began significantly to smile, and Monsieur d'Anguilhem said, with a bantering shake of the head as he placed his hand on the tutor's shoulder, —

"Ah! abbé, abbé! you have made a good-for-nothing of your pupil."

The baron had not lost sight of his dearest project, which was to reunite Anguilhem and Beuzerie. As for the baroness, she murmured, —

"Really, Constance is a charming child, and I should be very happy to call her my daughter."

"At all events," responded the Abbé Dubuquoi, "the wedding will not take place, I hope, until my pupil has finished his studies."

The baron and the baroness began to laugh a little at themselves, and more at the abbé. Indeed, such

schemes concerning a lad of fifteen and a little girl of twelve were, even in the eyes of their projectors, too foolish to be entertained by the judgment. The baron therefore was the first to drop the subject by saying, —

"Time will tell; let it work and we will talk of something else."

And they talked of Monsieur de Bouzenois. The morning slipped by without Roger's being seen again. But, about two o'clock in the afternoon, just as they were sitting down to dinner, he entered the room, sheepish, crestfallen, and red-eyed. The baron cast at the baroness a meaning glance that said, —

"*Diable! diable!* the matter does not seem to be running on wheels."

The chevalier took his place at the table, but he did not eat, which with him was a sign of great preoccupation. Then, after dinner, he sat a while beside his mother; he rearranged his private library, which consisted of thirty volumes, taken from the library of the château; he loitered behind the baron as the latter made his rounds of the kitchen-garden; he returned, still silent; and he at last interrupted his silence only to complain of a violent headache, and request that he might withdraw early, a request which, we may readily suppose, was granted unconditionally.

But, after returning to his room, Roger forgot that his apartment was situated directly above his mother's, that every one of his movements was betrayed by the creaking floor. All night long he walked his room, like the *malade imaginaire*, back and forth and up and down. Not a step was lost to the baron and the baroness.

"There is always hope left to every devil," said the baron; "but we are worsted by Beuzerie."

The next morning the baron himself went out to the

stable and found Christopher strutting before his rack. He returned through the kitchen with an upward glance; the three guns were above the high mantel. Roger had not gone out. Roger was asleep. At Roger's age, however troubled one may be, nature is exacting; one must sleep and eat.

So Roger slept until nine o'clock; at nine o'clock he descended to breakfast, his eyes swollen and his cheeks pale. Poor boy! yet he had slept two hours longer than on the preceding night. There is a great difference between the sleeplessness of joy and that of sorrow.

However, Roger ate; but, while he was eating, the dining-room door opened, and Monsieur de Beuzerie's valet appeared with a letter in his hand. The chevalier recognized Comtois, grew red and turned pale alternately; then, observing that the valet was approaching his father, he arose from the table, and ran to shut himself within his room.

In spite of his philosophical pretensions, a cold chill ran over the Baron d'Anguilhem as he opened the despatch, whose contents he could surmise. What is more, Comtois had assumed his serious air and majestic bearing. Now, neither the one nor the other augured any good; one always guesses at the message by the messenger's face. However, the baron transferred his eyes from Comtois' visage to the viscount's letter, and read as follows: —

"*Monsieur and dear Neighbor,* — This is to tender our best wishes for your welfare and to present the very humble compliments of Madame de Beuzerie and myself to you and Madame la Baronne. We are sorry to have something of a disagreeable nature to communicate with regard to your son, Monsieur le Chevalier Roger Tancrède, whom I surprised yesterday in a secluded quarter of the park on his

knees to our daughter, Mademoiselle de Beuzerie, whose hands he was kissing with an ardor rather excessive in a school-boy of fifteen. You well know, monsieur, my dear neighbor, that it is very painful for us to enter such a complaint against a son whose father and mother we love so much, and, also, that we must regard with disfavor his pursuit of our daughter, by which we are no doubt honored, but which seems to us not only very precocious, as she is scarcely thirteen, but very ill-advised as well, in that it is conducted without your consent. We regret to be compelled to say that it would be a source of great uneasiness to us should Monsieur le Chevalier Roger Tancrède come again to Beuzerie, but we count upon your friendship and your good advice to bring him to reason; for, in short, our daughter is ill of the affair and of the cold she has undoubtedly taken. However, in view of the pressing necessity, her illness does not prevent her leaving for the convent this evening.

"Adieu, monsieur and dear friend. Believe in our sincere desire to please you, and in our lively regret at having been forced to enter such complaints.

"DE BEUZERIE.

"The seventeenth day of April, 1708."

That the letter almost dropped from the baron's hands did not prevent his ringing for the housekeeper to have Comtois taken to the pantry, there to be well treated and regaled with the very best. He then answered the viscount's letter, promising to call and make, on behalf of the chevalier, due apologies both to him and to Madame de Beuzerie.

Warmed up by the welcome that he had received, and which he was far from expecting of the baron's courtesy, Comtois told the cook, while drinking his bottle of Orléans, that Mademoiselle Constance seemed greatly grieved and wept aloud. In the wake of this confidence

there followed almost as much sorrow at Anguilhem as there was grief at Beuzerie. In his quality of only son, Roger Tancrède was not only adored by the baron and the baroness, but also by all the retainers of the château; and most assuredly, if theirs had still been the days when similar suits were adjudged by lance and sword, the baron might without resistance have armed his ten vassals to go and carry off the young châtelaine who had been refused to his son.

Comtois having departed, the chevalier was sent for. The baron admonished him with a few very paternal and very mild reproaches concerning the precociousness of his amorous inclinations, and on the propriety of finishing his studies, at least, before thinking of marriage. Then the baroness added that when the time came for such thoughts, it would be quite as well that the chevalier should not cast his eyes on very wealthy heiresses, presumption that might bring upon his parents the humiliation of a refusal.

Stung to the quick, Roger replied that there had been a mistake, that he was not in love with Mademoiselle Constance, that he had never thought of marriage, nor had he for a moment entertained any desire other than to please his tutor, Monsieur l'Abbé Dubuquoi; that, as for his mother's anxiety about his aiming his addresses at too lofty a mark, her fear was entirely chimerical, since he was firmly resolved to remain a bachelor. Poor child! he did not suspect that the greatest danger to be encountered in his life would arise, perhaps, from polygamy, a hanging offence!

There was so much of wounded pride in the chevalier's denial, that both father and mother respected his falsehood. Consequently, the baron gave him his hand, his mother kissed him, and, in accordance with the de-

sire that he had expressed, he was sent to his tutor who, instead of the loves of Dido and Æneas, made him repeat a chapter on the contempt of riches. Poor Roger was decidedly unfortunate, both as lover and as student. As a lover, he had fallen from Mademoiselle Constance to Monsieur de Beuzerie, and as a student, from Virgil to Seneca.

The chevalier had no sooner left his presence than the baron made a very grand toilet, and proceeded to Beuzerie to pay the promised visit. He was received with an air of constraint by the viscount and the viscountess, who attributed their embarrassment to the preparations for their daughter's return to her convent. The baron asked to see Mademoiselle de Beuzerie, a request which could not be refused. Constance entered with eyes so red and swollen that Monsieur d'Anguilhem discerned that this time the departure was not in the least a pretence. The baron then spoke very courteously of the chevalier's unpardonable folly, ascribing all the impropriety of his conduct to youthful ignorance and thoughtlessness, adding, finally, that the poor boy had bitterly repented it, and that he begged his neighbors, and especially his fair young neighbor, to forget all that had occurred within the last three days; thereupon Constance became as pale as death, and feeling that she was about to burst into tears, fled from the salon.

The baron had made up his mind as to the young maid's feelings. She loved the chevalier deeply, and his eye had penetrated to the very depths of the virgin heart of the heiress of Beuzerie; the parents remained to be sounded in their turn. This was not a difficult matter. The viscount himself turned the conversation upon a certain Marquis de Croisey who lived with his parents in Loches, and enjoyed an income of something

like three hundred louis. For a long time there had been a fair understanding between the two families, and he added even that so great importance had been attached to what had just passed only because the affair might prove an obstacle in the eyes of that gentleman.

The baron felt the indirect thrust aimed at himself, and, as we have said, being a master hand at fencing, he parried with a thrust direct, saying that, in paying the visit to Beuzerie, he was so far from thinking to reinstate his son, that he quite intended this visit to be his last. In vain did they beg that he would not be so easily offended; he was firm. They attempted to make excuses. He rose, saying that a d'Anguilhem was the equal of a Croisey, and that except for a slight difference in fortunes one d'Anguilhem was, in his opinion, worth as much as all the Beuzeries in the land.

This somewhat exaggerated estimate of the value of the d'Anguilhem family would undoubtedly have led to a serious quarrel between the two respectable old gentlemen, both exceedingly testy on questions of honor, had not Madame de Beuzerie, a new type of the Sabine woman, cast herself between them. The baron and the viscount contented themselves with bowing to each other with icy dignity, and parted in utter wrath. On that same evening, according to announcement, Mademoiselle Constance set out for the convent at Chinon.

Very impatiently the Chevalier Roger Tancrède awaited the baron's return, since, in his filial esteem for his father, he counted greatly upon him to renew with the Beuzeries the thread of the old friendship that was threatening to end. But, quite contrary to what he had hoped, the chevalier saw his father returning with a countenance sterner than when he went away. He then thought that things were going from bad to

worse, and, under pretext of being more than ever devoted to Latin, he shut himself in his room to work, he said, but really to sigh and grieve quite at his ease.

We have all been through the first emotions of a first love; we have all known by swelling grief that we were serving man's apprenticeship. We have all aged by many years in a single hour; it was with the poor chevalier as with us all.

He spent the night pacing the length and breadth of his room; then, when day appeared, to beguile his mental pain with physical fatigue, he shouldered his gun, unchained Castor, and set off for a hunt.

But the hunting was merely an excuse of which poor Roger had taken advantage. Without knowing how the thing happened, since he had coursed no hare in that direction, nor had the flight of a covey of partridges lured him over valley and mountain, without there having been the least excuse, in short, for the four or five leagues that he had accomplished on foot, our hunter found himself in a warren lying about five hundred paces from Beuzerie, and occupying both sides of the cross-road leading from the château to Loches. Now, it happened by a coincidence which, however, was not at all extraordinary, that the Vicomte de Beuzerie, also for distraction, without doubt, since he had his parental anxieties just as Roger had his lover's troubles, it happened, I repeat, that the Vicomte de Beuzerie had also come out to shoot a rabbit, and that at a bend of the narrow road, the two hunters came upon each other face to face.

Each recoiled a step at sight of the other. Roger had a great mind to take to his heels and run; but he felt instinctively that it would be a grossly stupid thing to do, and that it would be far wiser, being caught in the

act, to brazen it out; besides, he was in the middle of a warren, and he could as easily be looking for a rabbit as seeking for Mademoiselle Constance.

During the first moment of astonishment, Monsieur de Beuzerie frowned, and Roger rested the butt of his gun upon the ground and doffed his cap. The viscount was the first to break the silence.

"You again, Chevalier Roger Tancrède!" he tartly exclaimed.

"Monsieur le Vicomte," responded the other, "I am here by accident. My dog started up a wounded hare; I followed him, and before I was aware of it, found myself in this warren."

"And why is your dog at Beuzerie?" demanded the viscount.

"Why is my dog at Beuzerie? Why, I have twenty times seen your dogs all over La Pintade, and La Pintade, I think, belongs to Anguilhem; and then, besides, I thought it was an understood thing that we have the right to hunt on each other's grounds."

The words were enunciated with a firmness that the viscount did not expect from a lad of fifteen; but Roger had taken his misadventure to heart, and he must be revenged on some one. No one but Constance's father was at hand, and he abused Constance's father. Had he been merely a keeper, Roger would have beaten him.

"Certainly," replied the viscount, a little astonished at such logic, which proved that Roger was not easily disconcerted; "certainly it is understood, I know, that our preserves should be in common; but, after what has taken place, young man, many things are changed, do you hear?"

"With you, monsieur, but not with us," returned the chevalier. "You are master of your own lands, Monsieur

le Vicomte, and you can withhold the shooting from any one you wish; but I believe that I may say, in my father's name, monsieur, that you will always be very welcome to ours. Here, Castor, here!"

And Roger turned his back on the viscount, who stood aghast at the aplomb of his young neighbor; but the young man had gone barely a few steps before he had reflected upon the difference in age between him and the viscount, and he reproached himself for having presumed to give him a lesson. He therefore turned back, and, approaching the old gentleman, said politely, but not less firmly, —

"Monsieur, I have the honor to present my respects."

And he courteously bowed to the viscount, who mechanically returned the salute.

"The devil! the devil!" ejaculated the viscount, gazing after Roger as he strode away; "either I am greatly deceived, or there goes a young fellow that will give us a snarl to untangle. Luckily, Mademoiselle de Beuzerie is on the road to Chinon."

The viscount had forgotten that the lady superior of the Augustine convent of Chinon, to which he was returning his daughter, happened to be an aunt of the Chevalier d'Anguilhem.

IV.

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR DEMONSTRATES THAT FATHERS AND MOTHERS OF DAUGHTERS IN CONVENTS CAN SLEEP ON BOTH EARS.

But Roger had borne it in mind, and this is what had kept him from yielding to utter despair. He remembered even, if his childish memories were not at fault, that he had been a great favorite with that good aunt whom he had formerly visited with his mother on two or three occasions, and who, in turn, had as often come to Anguilhem; yet Roger experienced some pangs in the depths of his heart for having been less attentive to her at that period, or rather at those different periods, than he should have been.

Indeed, he recalled the innumerable cares, attentions, and civilities lavished on himself which had then appeared irksome and fatiguing, and which, on the contrary, ought to have filled him with gratitude. Among other cloistral diversions, Roger had not forgotten how reluctantly he had been forced, during the whole time of his sojourn at Chinon, to engage in mass and vespers, and that, too, in spite of the angelic singing of the nuns, novices, and boarding-school girls, which accompanied the divine service. Ah! well, only see how fickle in his tastes and changeable in his desires is man. At present, his highest ambition was to attend those religious ceremonies, to try to recognize, among all those angel voices, the voice of Constance soaring melodiously toward heaven; only to see amid that white flock of the

Lord's, that figure, so ethereal, so light, so pure, that she seemed to belong to some unknown dream-world, which, for the time being, had lent her to ours, and which threatened each hour to recall her.

Above all, Roger dimly remembered in his aunt's room a certain window that overlooked a garden where the nuns walked in hours of recreation; a window at which — he really could not understand his blindness — he had scarcely looked. All this had been seething in the young man's mind ever since he learned that Mademoiselle de Beuzerie was at school in the convent directed by his aunt. The tender love of that good, kind aunt recurred to his heart, and he thought he owed her some atonement for the slight appreciation that he had displayed for her favors. His atonement should take the form of a visit, during which he would devote himself assiduously to his duties as Christian and nephew, attending services regularly and entertaining his aunt, especially when she sat in that charming little room overlooking the garden. The visit, then, was a settled thing; but, it is quite understood, *in petto*, and without the chevalier's having consulted any one as to its expediency.

Consequently, one morning, before daylight, Roger left the house, saddled Christopher, and, that no serious uneasiness should be felt on his account, informed the stable-boy that he was to be gone four or five days.

From Anguilhem to Chinon was a distance of about twenty-four leagues. Without overdoing Christopher, therefore, it was a matter of two days. Indeed, on that same night, Roger slept at Sainte Maure, a little town situated about midway of the distance to be made, and on the next day at four o'clock in the afternoon he was at Chinon.

Although it was six or eight years since the chevalier had

visited his aunt, he had not forgotten the way to the convent. He therefore proceeded straight to the Augustines, without needing to ask the way of any one, and knocked at the door of the saintly community. As the convent of the Augustines was very strictly kept, the attendant nun who came to open the door began to knit her brows in a formidable manner at sight of a tall, handsome youth demanding entrance into that holy asylum, but, upon his naming and defining the degree of relationship between him and the mother superior, he saw the face of the venerable concierge suddenly relax, and the doors open as of their own accord. Five minutes later, the Chevalier Roger Tancrède was respectfully kissing the plump hand of his good aunt.

She was one of those charming abbesses of whom the aristocratic traditions of the grand century have handed portraits down to us, — neither too large nor too small, plump, comfortable, perfect confections of gentle speech and pious aspect, who found means, even while observing the rules of the order, to impart to their garb a grace and coquetry savoring indeed of worldliness, but which, nevertheless, one did not know just where to attack. She was, moreover, a younger sister of Madame d'Anguilhem, and born, like her, a La Roche Berthaud, that is, descended from one of the oldest and noblest families in Touraine.

The good superior, who had never entertained any but holy thoughts, was very far from suspecting the motive which brought her nephew to Chinon. She gave orders that Christopher should be led to the stables, and that the excellent creature, whose life for some time past had been so very eventful, should receive the best possible care. As for Roger, he was simultaneously conducted to his apartment, an apartment under lock of the superior's

key, and consisting of a large and a small room. Now, the little room was that very little chamber so coveted by Roger, which looked out upon the cloister.

Roger's interview with his aunt had been most touching. It had been three years since the good lady had seen either the baron or the baroness; and, in three years, Roger had grown so tall, and he was so changed, that at first sight the venerable superior had been slow to identify him, and had almost withdrawn the hand which, in his joy on at last finding himself within the walls of the convent that held the object of his love, the chevalier had too enthusiastically pressed. But, at Roger's first words of the baron and the baroness, saying that he came in their name, full of anxiety as they were as to her health, to obtain for them news of their sister and sister-in-law, the good abbess had not held back. Tall boy as he had grown, she folded her nephew in her arms, and in a very motherly way returned on his brow the kiss which she had just received on the hand.

It was all Roger could desire for the moment: he had gained entrance.

Nothing was to be hoped for on that evening; besides, the dear child must be so tired after having ridden forty leagues on horseback, that all exertion was forbidden him until the next morning. In his aunt's own room he was served with a charming little supper, consisting of sliced chicken with jelly, tarts, and preserves; then he was shut in his room, with orders to go to bed at once, and not wake up until it was time for the morning service.

Roger submitted, not wishing to excite suspicion; he entered his room, and quite philosophically heard the door of his apartment locked behind him with a double turn. It is true that he still had the window. He immediately ran thither, for it was the recreation hour;

but, by an odious fatality, a heavy thunder-storm, which, most certainly, had little idea of what it was about at the moment, had just burst upon Chinon; consequently, as the convent garden afforded no shelter, all the nuns, the novices, and the boarders were just then within the cloister.

Roger saw that, so long as that pelting storm endured, he would be wasting his time waiting for any one to come into the garden. Surely, had Constance known that the handsome young man was standing there, his heart beating, and eyes fixed upon the garden whither she came daily to play, rain could not have stayed her, and in spite of the harm that might result to her little satin slippers and beautiful white gown, she would have felt the need of an airing, however damp and unwholesome it was at the time. But the poor child believed herself to be quite separated from the young man until the vacation, at least, perhaps for a longer time still, perhaps forever, and, leaning on the arm of one of her friends, she was walking very sadly within the cloister, her pretty little face, pale and sad, drooping above her breast.

And then night fell quite gently, bringing to the horizon beautiful bands of gilded clouds that clearly indicated a magnificent day for the morrow. Roger believed in prognostics of that kind. On the evenings preceding his great hunting expeditions, which, before he had seen Constance, had furnished the only excitements that could quicken his heart, he had more than once questioned that celestial barometer which the inhabitants of our country districts so skilfully interpret. He was, therefore, entirely reassured as to the morrow.

This prospect brought him one of the best nights that he had enjoyed for eight days. He fell asleep, confident

of the future. For, at fifteen, what is the future? The next day, three or four days perhaps, — a week at most.

In the morning he awoke with the birds; scarcely were his movements heard before an aged nun rapped at his door. Roger hastened to open it, and was met by his early breakfast. The early breakfast consisted of a cup of smoking cream, some little cakes that were yet hot, and some candied fruits.

Roger found the fare rather cloistral, indeed, and infinitely more elegant than substantial. However, as he understood that it was merely an instalment, he asked when the regular breakfast was served. He was told that it came after mass. He then inquired the hour of mass, and learned that it began at nine o'clock and ended at eleven. Upon which, Roger drank his cream to the last drop, and crunched his cakes to the very last crumb. He was finishing his breakfast, when he heard the rustling of a dress along the parquet, and saw his door open. It was the good aunt coming to find out how her nephew had passed the night, whether his bed had been soft, whether he had slept well, whether he had had any bad dreams, et cetera, et cetera.

Roger answered cheerfully all these inquiries; more than that, there was about him a little air of gaiety and good health which, to eyes less solicitous than those of his kind relative, would have answered of itself. He was curled, trim, and bewitching enough for a veritable little abbé. The good aunt felt an unspeakable desire to eat her nephew.

Yet she had not forgotten the infantine grimaces made by the dear little fellow, five or six years before, whenever the question of attendance upon divine service arose. So she thought it would be necessary to resort to some circumlocution in leading up to the subject which the

devout dame conscientiously believed herself forced to broach to the chevalier; but to her great astonishment, the chevalier met her with the response that since the period of which his aunt was speaking, he was very much changed in his attitude toward matters of religion; that he had reflected much on the subject, and that he had come to regard hearing mass and vespers every day not only as a duty, but as a pleasure also. Such a declaration overwhelmed the superior with joy. She gazed at her nephew with pious affection, and declared that from that moment she should cherish the hope of there being a great saint, one day, in the Anguilhem family, as there had been great lawyers and great captains, the nobility of the Anguilhems being of both gown and sword.

Meanwhile, the bell rang for mass. Forced to put into action the principles which he had just professed, Roger gallantly offered his arm to his aunt to conduct her to the chapel; but, in this, Roger was deceived. The superior gave him to understand that, during the interval of six years which had rolled away since she had seen him, he had become too big a boy and, above all, too handsome a gentleman to enter the choir with her and take his seat, as he had formerly done, on the steps of her stall. He must simply take his seat with the congregation, outside of the choir, which was reserved exclusively for the nuns, novices, and boarders.

There was nothing for it but to submit to this rule; besides, by insisting, Roger would undoubtedly have betrayed the influences that had suddenly rendered him so deeply devout. He bowed therefore in token of submission, and asked that he be shown the direction he must take in obedience to the instructions that he had just received.

The convent chapel was already open to the faithful.

As the Augustine dames of Chinon rightly passed for having the most beautiful voices in the province, the divine service at the convent was always well attended. Roger slipped into the front row of auditors, and sat in as close proximity as possible to the grille which separated the choir from the nave.

His expectation was rewarded. Above all those virgin voices which were lifted heavenward, he distinguished one, so sweet, so vibrant, so inspired, that he did not doubt for a moment that the voice was the voice of Constance. After that, his sole purpose was to follow that voice in all its modulations, without for an instant losing it among its companion voices. Hanging upon those notes, it seemed to him that his soul rose with hers to the celestial abode, whither she was going to sing the glory of the blessed, and again returned with her to earth, to which she descended to mourn the sins and sorrows of men, all the time soaring above earthly sounds, like the nocturnes drawn from the Æolian harps by the wind, and which might be taken for strains escaped from the concerts of the spirits of air.

As long as the mass lasted, Roger was like one entranced. He had never heard, or rather, he had never listened to the sacred music of the church, the most beautiful of all. He discovered within himself answering chords, of which he had himself been ignorant, chords which vibrated to the depths of his soul, being awakened at once by the double touch of love and religion.

Mass had been over for some time, and Roger still knelt before the grating of the choir. Throughout the sacred service the good superior had closely observed him, and she had been edified by the profound rapture depicted upon the face of her nephew every time the choir began to sing. And she awaited his reappearance

to congratulate him upon the change wrought within him, and which she no longer doubted, now that she had with her own eyes beheld the symptoms. Hence she was not at all surprised when Roger asked to withdraw a short time to his own room, there to recover from the mysterious emotions that he had just experienced. Not only did the worthy superior give assent, but, carried away by the feeling of admiration which piety so profound inspired in her, she even came very near asking the young neophyte for his benediction. Roger left her under the influence of that feeling and slowly retired to his room; but barely had he given the key a double turn, when he ran to the window and opened it.

The garden was thronged with young girls, who, like bees, flitted from flower to flower, and revealed their instinctive simplicity or pride, some in weaving wreaths of marguerites, periwinkles, or violets, others in fashioning crowns of roses, of tulips, or of lilies.

At a little distance from the group of girls scattered here and there like flowers themselves amid the flowers, walked two of their number, talking in low tones and glancing uneasily around from time to time, as if to assure themselves that no one was listening. One of the two was Constance. Both had their backs turned to the window where Roger was standing, and they were pursuing a path that ended at a wall; hence it was evident that, on reaching the end of the walk, they would retrace their steps. This is just what happened. The two girls turned round; Constance raised her eyes mechanically toward the window. The young girl recognized Roger, and, unable to control her surprise, she gave a cry of joy and astonishment.

The chevalier had been seen, that was all he desired. He stepped back.

The cry uttered by Constance had been so shrill that her young companions came flocking about her to discover the cause of it. Constance shrank back as a flower folds upon its stem, and answered that she had stepped on a pebble, her ankle had turned, and she was at first afraid that it was sprained.

The poor child came very near suffering the penalty of her untruth, for she was instantly threatened with the convent doctor, whom twenty at once of her officious companions proposed to call. But Constance insisted with such truthful emphasis that she no longer felt any pain, that the girls who had gathered around went away one after the other, as birds flit one by one, and, in a little while they were again scattered about the garden. Constance remained alone with her friend.

Soon the eyes of the two girls were slowly turned in the direction of the window, and Roger clearly saw that there was no secret between the two fair creatures. Then he advanced, taking care, however, to keep in such a light as to be seen only by those who knew of his presence. Constance leaned against her friend's shoulder, and blushed deliciously. Then she rose, and began to pick a bunch of pansies, which she placed in the sash about her waist, and whose deep purple stood out in relief against her white dress. And then, after walking about a few moments, the two girls went indoors. An instant later Roger heard steps in the corridor. He ran to his door, but, quickly as he opened it, he was too late. He saw nothing but two sylph-like forms, two shadows, two visions vanishing at the extreme end of the gallery. But in front of his door, as the sole trace of the flight of the two school-girls, lay the bunch of pansies which, a moment before, he had seen in Constance's sash.

Roger pounced upon the bouquet, and kissed it again

and again; then, as he heard the footsteps of his aunt, who, thinking that he must have recovered from his religious emotions, was coming for him to go to breakfast, he quickly slipped the bouquet into his breast, and hastened to meet the worthy superior.

Nothing so emboldens one as success. The chevalier had seen Constance at a distance, and had been seen by her. He had pressed against his heart the flowers that she had worn; it was more than he had hoped for at first, and yet it was already not enough. He desired to meet her. He must speak with her; and he lay in wait for the first opportunity, ready to seize it by the forelock whenever it presented itself. The good superior herself gave it to him.

One can understand that the conversation between Roger and his aunt was an interminable exchange of questions on the one side and answers on the other. At first the questions related to the baron and the baroness, then to the farmers, and then to the land; from this they passed to the nearest neighbors, who were the Senectères, then from the Senectères they went on to the Chemillés; at last, leaving the Chemillés, they reached the Beuzeries.

"Ah, *bon Dieu!*" cried Roger on hearing that name, "how fortunate, dear aunt, that you have reminded me of a commission which I had utterly forgotten. Three or four days before my departure for Chinon I met Monsieur de Beuzerie when out hunting, and, as he knew I was about to make you a visit, he begged to charge me with a letter for his daughter. Now, what I have done with that letter, which he sent me on the day before my departure, I have not the remotest idea."

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the good superior, "it is to be hoped that you have not lost it. The poor little

girl has been very sad since her return, and that letter would have been a comfort to her."

"Indeed, aunt," said Roger, "I will search for it; it must be in my portmanteau. But if Mademoiselle de Beuzerie is sad you should give her a doll, for she is still a mere child, it seems to me."

"Not so fast, my practical man," returned the superior. "You are wrong; in a month Mademoiselle de Beuzerie has become a young woman. I do not know what happened to her during her stay with her parents, but I do know that she is no longer recognizable."

"But," said Roger, "I dined with her at Anguilhem barely eight or ten days ago, and I must say, aunt, that I did not observe the slightest trace of what you are saying."

"Well, listen," said the good superior, "do you go and look for the letter, and I will summon Constance. You shall judge for yourself."

"Certainly," said Roger, bending over to pick up his napkin, for he felt the blood rushing to his face at such a rate that he knew his blush would betray him if his aunt chanced to glance at him, "certainly, aunt; but," continued he, with an effort at self-control, "after breakfast, if you please."

"Yes, yes, eat your breakfast, my boy, eat your breakfast in peace. At your age it is an important matter, I know; but I beg that you will try to find that letter, for if it is lost the poor child will be in despair, I am sure."

"Oh, it shall be found, my dear aunt! You need not be anxious. I think I remember, now, where it is."

"I am delighted!" returned the abbess. "My poor little girls, how I love them!"

"Well, aunt," resumed d'Anguilhem, "I will not de-

lay any longer the pleasure that you think this letter will afford to Mademoiselle de Beuzerie. Send for her, and I will proceed to look for the paternal epistle."

And Roger went out of the room with such an easy air that, had the superior entertained any suspicions, she could not have preserved them in the face of such assurance; but she was a hundred leagues from having any. She was, therefore, completely the dupe of the chevalier.

Roger delayed his return for two reasons: first, that he might have time to write a letter professedly from the viscount; secondly, because he wished to give Constance time to compose herself. As to the contents of the letter, the reader suspects beforehand; it contained a conjugation of the verb "to love" in the past, present, and future tenses. Roger also informed Constance as to the pass to which matters had come between him and the viscount, giving her, word for word, their interview in the warren at Beuzerie. It was important that Constance should be prepared, and should not permit herself to be taken by surprise by any strategy on the part of her parents.

On returning Roger found Mademoiselle de Beuzerie beside his aunt. When she saw him Constance blushed and paled by turns; but fortunately her back was toward the window, so that, placed as she was in her own shadow, the good superior observed nothing. Roger approached the young maiden with great deliberation, and presenting the letter, said, —

"Mademoiselle, will you pardon me, arriving as I did last evening, for having so long delayed giving you this letter? But Monsieur de Beuzerie expressly told me to give you the letter personally, that I might bring him positive news of your health, about which he seemed quite uneasy. I have, therefore, begged my good aunt to

put you to this slight inconvenience. You will pardon me, will you not?"

Constance stammered a few words of thanks; but, as her first glance at the letter told her that the address was not in her father's handwriting, she understood, and put it in her apron pocket instead of opening it.

"Well," said the superior, taking the young girl's two hands and drawing her toward herself, "well, will this letter console you any, naughty little pouter? for I have heard about you. I am told that since your return you do nothing but moan and sigh."

"Why, think of it, aunt," interrupted Roger, who saw that the poor child was on the rack, "one very naturally cries a little on leaving one's parents. Then the convent is not a very amusing place, is it, Mademoiselle Constance? and distractions must be rare."

"Well," said the abbess, "I intend to give you one to-day, my dear little girl. Instead of dining in the refectory with everybody, you shall come and dine with me and my nephew."

"Oh, how delightful!" cried Constance, unable to conceal her first impulse of joy.

"Mademoiselle," said Roger, realizing that he must not give his aunt time to analyze the feeling that had wrested from Constance the exclamation of delight which she had imprudently allowed to escape her; "Mademoiselle, am I to have the happiness of being your messenger as I have had the honor of being Monsieur your father's? and will you condescend to intrust me with an answer to the letter I have brought you?"

"Are you then leaving so soon, monsieur?" asked Constance, blushing.

"Yes," returned Roger, "I am afraid that I shall be compelled to leave Chinon at any moment. Alas! I am

in the hands of a tutor, and I confess that whenever I hear a sound, whenever a door is opened, I expect to see the shrewd face of my dear Abbé Dubuquoi. Pray, lose no time then, I beg, if you wish to profit by the opportunity that I offer for the delivery of your reply, which, I am sure, is awaited most impatiently."

"In that case, monsieur," said Constance, "if our good mother is willing, I will retire to read the letter that you have brought, and to answer it."

"Go, dear child, go," said the superior, kissing the girl's forehead, "and do not forget that we expect you to dine with us at two o'clock; besides, I will send to remind you."

"Oh! that will not be necessary, madame," replied Constance. "It affords me too much pleasure to be with you and monsieur your nephew, our kind country neighbor, not to respond promptly to your kind invitation."

And, quite recovered from her first embarrassment, Mademoiselle de Beuzerie made a most coquettish little courtesy, and withdrew, her hand on the letter that she kept in her pocket, while Roger watched her departure with his hand over the bunch of flowers which he was pressing to his heart.

Constance kept her word; she was more than prompt. At a quarter before two she was in the superior's room where Roger was waiting for her. As she entered he asked if she had remembered her letter. Thereupon, Constance, full of blushes, drew from her girdle a pretty little note addressed to the Vicomte de Beuzerie, which she delivered to Roger, but without having strength even to commend it to his care. As for Roger, under the pretext of fearing to lose it, he went off immediately to secure it in his portfolio, he said, but in reality to devour the lines that she had enclosed.

It was one of those charming child-compositions, very naïve, very affectionate, very sincere, full of promises of undying love, born yesterday and sworn to last till death. All those protestations covered four pages, and yet this could have been reduced to three words: "I love you." Roger first kissed the envelope, then the four pages of the letter, back and front, then every line of the four pages, and finally every word of every line. His delight resembled delirium.

He returned and found Constance blushing like a cherry. The two poor children exchanged a look full of unspeakable happiness. At that moment, the door opened, and the superior gave a pleased cry. At this outburst, the two young people turned, and their eyes, all shining with happiness, became clouded with tears.

The person whose unexpected appearance had elicited a cry of pleasure from the superior was the Baronne d'Anguilhem.

The two sisters embraced, while the poor children glanced significantly at each other, as if to say, "All is over." Then Roger approached his mother, who, instead of embracing him as she had just embraced his aunt, merely gave him her hand to kiss. As for Mademoiselle de Beuzerie, she made the baroness a deep courtesy, to which the latter responded by a chilling inclination of the head.

The two children stood trembling; but the baroness said nothing, and after the first greetings exchanged with her sister, she accepted the latter's invitation to place herself at the table.

Constance longed to ask to be excused, but she dared not. Her place was between the baroness and the superior, hence, during the entire dinner, she dared not raise her eyes; more than once, indeed, Roger surprised a

tear as it stealthily rolled down her cheek, and was deftly brushed away with her napkin.

As for him, he blushed and turned pale ten times a minute. He tried to eat, but his heart was so full that the feat was impossible.

Meanwhile, the baroness was telling how it had occurred to her also to surprise her dear sister, and how the baron had been unable to accompany her, detained as he was by his preparations for a journey that he contemplated taking with the chevalier immediately upon the latter's return to Anguilhem. At this news of the chevalier's prospective journey, poor Constance's tears precipitated themselves more rapidly, and the chevalier felt his heartache increase. At last, Constance could contain herself no longer; she threw herself back and sobbed aloud. In this unlooked-for explosion, the good abbess beheld no more than the young girl's grief, and she questioned her — we must do her this justice — with a mother's anxiety. But Constance only made answer that she did not know what was the matter except that it was probably what people called the blues, and that she would ask permission to retire to her room.

This permission was the more readily accorded her as Madame la Baronne d'Anguilhem did not at all press her to remain. Constance withdrew therefore without one consoling word; for, restrained by his mother's presence, Roger did not dare even to bid her good-bye.

After Mademoiselle de Beuzerie had gone and the baroness thought that she must have re-entered her own room, she bade her son go to his apartment and without delay prepare his portmanteau, as it was the baron's order that he should set out that same evening for Anguilhem. Roger obeyed without a word of protest. Filial respect was still, at that period, one of those

precious family virtues that were considered sacred, especially by the country aristocracy, that sanctuary of the nobility. He therefore very meekly saluted his mother and retired to his room.

The two sisters remained together.

V.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM ESCAPED FROM THE COLLEGE OF THE JESUITS AT AMBOISE WITH THE INTENTION OF CARRYING OFF MADEMOISELLE DE BEUZERIE, AND WHAT NEWS HE LEARNED ON REACHING THE CONVENT.

It is unnecessary to tell the reader upon what topic the conversation of the two ladies turned. Let us say merely that at the end of an hour they summoned the chevalier, who, quite crestfallen in his discomfiture, came with his little portmanteau under his arm.

The superior knew all. She had sent to Constance for the letter which the chevalier had brought her, pretending it to be from the viscount; but Constance had met her friend in the corridor, and had quickly slipped the letter, her only treasure, into the other's hand. Thereupon, as no one knew of this incident, Mademoiselle boldly replied that she had burned the letter they were asking for, and that, if they doubted her, they had only to search for it; and they did, but in vain.

The baroness had come with the horse and cariole, escorted by the farmer. Christopher was tied at the side of his mate, and they departed after a brief leavetaking, during which the abbess maintained toward her nephew the severe dignity befitting her wounded pride.

No sooner were Madame d'Anguilhem and her son alone in the cariole, than the baroness, observing the chevalier's sadness, lost all power to exhibit malice

toward the poor boy. Women have an instinctive sympathy for all the pangs of love, and the strictest mother becomes indulgent when a fault committed by the heart is in question. Thus, instead of the dire reproaches expected by the chevalier, there followed a train of thoroughly logical arguments, based, first, upon the chevalier's age, which was barely fifteen years; then upon the difference between the fortunes of the Beuzeries and the d'Anguilhems; and finally upon the plans long cherished by Constance's father and the father of the Comte de Croisey. But to all this reasoning Roger opposed the following dilemma, as unanswerable and as powerful as all the logic in the world: —

"Mother, I love Constance, Constance loves me, and we are firmly resolved to die if we are separated."

During the two days of the journey's duration, the baroness attacked her son at all points; but she exhausted her logic without being able to obtain any response save the one we have given.

When the chevalier's disappearance had become known, a grand council was held at Anguilhem. The council was composed of the baron, the baroness, and the Abbé Dubuquoi. Now, the road he had taken had been learned on the day of Roger's departure, and, the direction once known, it had not been difficult to guess whither he was bound. The especial question before the council concerned the means to be employed in checking the progress of this love affair, which was exhibiting such alarming symptoms; or, at least, if it progressed, to prevent its resulting in a serious breach between the two families. The d'Anguilhems and the Beuzeries had always lived on excellent terms as neighbors, and it was the intention of the baron and the baroness still to maintain, on their part, at least, those pleasant relations.

The decision arrived at by the triumvirate was to the effect that, on his return to Anguilhem, the chevalier should be sent off to the College of the Jesuits at Amboise to pursue a course in philosophy. Upon this verdict the baroness set out to expedite his return, while the baron, as Madame d'Anguilhem had told her son, made preparations himself to conduct Roger to the capital of the province, lest he should play some prank upon his tutor while on the way.

Arriving at Anguilhem two days after his departure from Chinon, the chevalier, therefore, found everything ready for their start twenty-four hours later. Needless to say, any thought of rebellion against the parental decree was far from his mind. In the presence of his sweetheart, the chevalier felt himself already a young man; but when confronting the baron and the baroness, he promptly realized that he was still only a child.

The journey was a dreary one. Between the Abbé Dubuquoi, for whom he had no deep affection, and his father, whose severity of countenance momentarily checked his tender feelings, Roger was very ill at ease. Besides, the thought that he, a child of the woods, of the meadows, and of freedom, would have to spend a whole year in a kind of prison with a throng of people robed in black, who would impose the rules of their order upon his life, this thought, I say, weighed upon him as being a punishment out of all proportion to the fault he had committed. Then, a whole year without seeing Constance, — it was a century.

From time to time, it is true, there flashed through his brain a plan which had at first terrified the chevalier but to which, nevertheless, he became accustomed by dint of thinking about it. It was nothing less then adding all the little savings that he could get together to the small

sum which the baroness had already given him at parting and that which his father would no doubt give when leaving him; then, when he should find himself in possession of two or three hundred livres, which in the eyes of the chevalier was a fortune, he would escape from the college, set out for Chinon, scale the convent wall, carry off Constance, run away with her, and be married by the first priest they met.

Among the twenty-five or thirty volumes that Roger possessed in his library at Anguilhem, there was a romance entitled "L'Astrée," which had seen its best days in the baroness' youth, and in which flourished any number of kings who carried off shepherdesses and of queens who espoused shepherds. Now, Roger thought that, however great the pecuniary distance separating him from Constance, it was not to be compared with the social distance between a powerful king and a poor shepherdess, or a great queen and a humble shepherd. Then, too, there is an age at which one thinks that life is adjusted like a novel, and Roger had reached that age; only, what he did not know was that, while they could run away together at that age, they could not then be married.

In extreme situations, such as, for the time being, we have even thought hopeless, it is amazing, it is amazing, I repeat, to what extent peace is yielded to the mind and resignation to the heart by fixing upon a course of conduct, no matter what it lacks of common sense, let it present not a shadow of success. Roger well knew that, even supposing all the favorable circumstances, and many such would be required, were leagued to second this plan, it could be carried out only at a very distant date. But, no matter! however distant the hour, by adding days and months together, the hour must come. Point out to the

traveller, worn out with fatigue, lost in the darkness, wandering in a forest, ready to drop from weariness, point out a light upon the horizon, be that horizon two or three leagues away, and the poor wanderer will pluck up courage and walk with a step as rapid and as eager as in the morning at the time of setting out.

The chevalier, then, had already regained some degree of courage on his arrival at Amboise, and he entered the college more resigned, apparently, than his father had hoped for. This resignation touched the worthy gentleman, who, it must be said, tenderly loved his sole heir. Thus it came to pass that the paternal heart melted, and the result of the softened mood was a sum of seventy-two livres, represented by three louis d'or which the baron slipped into his son's hand at parting.

These three louis, added to the other two that the baroness had given him, formed a total of five louis, or one hundred and twenty livres, which was already a pretty little beginning toward his savings.

Roger had comprehended that, in order to avoid all suspicion, he must begin by applying himself to work with exemplary assiduity. They do thorough work, as we know, among the Jesuits, and although the Abbé Dubuquoi was a preceptor very much above the ordinary tutor, the good fathers, after examining Roger on what he knew, nevertheless decided that it was necessary for him to review his rhetoric. This news, which prolonged to two years his one year's stay in college, Roger received with greater fortitude than the abbé expected from him. However, as the abbé, less easily deceived than the baron, already suspected some wile to be underlying that appearance of resignation, he resolved not to lose sight of his pupil.

But, vigilant and farseeing as the abbé was, in this he was deceived. The chevalier's was one of those fertile natures in which ideas have only to be sown for them to bear fruit. Roger, who had no remedy for his love but work, and who, indeed, pretending to work, shut himself up to commune with Constance, Roger made rapid progress; young things easily become enamored. Our school-boy was enamored of Greek and Latin poetry; besides, in Virgil's Bucolics, in the Idyls of Theocritus, he was always coming upon some dialogue between shepherd and shepherdess that reminded the pupil of his own situation. It was undoubtedly meagre comfort; but meagre though it was, it aided our lover to wait.

Roger's first care had been to ascertain whether among his fellow pupils there were not some who came from Chinon. Fortune gave Roger his desire; three of his comrades were born in that town, and their parents lived there. The new-comer allied himself with them, and learned with a joy that can be understood, that one of the three young men, Henri de Narcey by name, had a sister in the Augustine convent. Now, as the sister had been three years at the convent school, she must be intimately acquainted with Mademoiselle de Beuzerie, or, at least, she must know her. Here were the means of correspondence.

Vacation time arrived. As Roger had entered college only in June, and as the vacation began at the end of August, a fear which had more than once beset his mind was realized. On Our Lady's Day, he received from the Baron d'Anguilhem a letter in which the worthy gentleman employed all his logic to explain to his son that the latter would do much better to spend his six weeks' vacation in studying and making up for lost time, than to return to Anguilhem. The truth was that the baron

and the baroness were depriving themselves of the pleasure of seeing their son, lest the neighborhood of Beuzerie should rekindle in the chevalier's heart the love which they thought about extinguished, because Roger no longer wrote of it. Also, to temper this denial as much as possible to the poor student, the Abbé Dubuquoi was authorized to take him on excursions in the neighborhood of Tours, and, as no one knew how parsimoniously the chevalier had managed his little hoard, the abbé was requested to give his pupil, out of the funds intrusted to his administration, two louis from the baron and one louis from the baroness. Now, as Roger had spent but twenty-four livres during the three months which had just rolled away, he consequently found himself seven louis ahead.

Roger, then, had become intimate with the three youths from Chinon, and particularly with Henri de Narcey. Also; when the latter was on the point of leaving for Chinon, the chevalier did not hesitate to unburden his heart to him. He told how he had loved Mademoiselle de Beuzerie and how she loved him; how he had been sent to college at Amboise because his parents disapproved of a love that did not meet with the approbation of Constance's parents; and how, finally, he was to be detained at college lest, during his stay at Anguilhem, he should commit some imprudent act upon finding himself so near Beuzerie.

Henri de Narcey understood it all perfectly, and he enlisted himself and his sister in the service of his comrade. Communication would be easily opened, because he had often heard his sister speak of Mademoiselle de Beuzerie, and always as an intimate friend. Indeed, Constance de Beuzerie and Mademoiselle Herminie de Narcey were never apart; and from the picture

of his sister that Henri drew for Roger, the latter recognized the young girl who was arm in arm with Constance on the day when he saw her in the convent garden, and when, at sight of him, Constance had been unable to repress the cry of surprise which she had been forced to pass off as a cry of pain.

Roger intrusted a letter to Henri; on her return to the convent the letter was to be delivered by Herminie to Constance; then, under cover of Herminie's letter to her brother, Constance could send back her answer. Roger unfolded to Constance his plan of running away from college, of carrying her off from the convent and marrying her in the presence of the curé of the first village that he came to on the road; once married, as a matter of course, their stubborn parents must bestow their blessing, whatever their dislike for the match. The letter, too, was full of pledges of inviolable fidelity and undying love.

The vacation arrived. The two friends parted, Roger commending his interests to Henri, Henri swearing to Roger that they could not be in better hands. September rolled away without Roger's manifesting the least impatience. He only, of all his comrades, had remained at college, and he worked in a way to satisfy the demands of the most exacting. The Abbé Dubuquoi could make nothing out of it.

At the beginning of October the students began to return; but, although Henri was the one whom Roger awaited with the most impatience, Henri was the last to return. True, on his return there was a little letter in the hand that Henri extended to Roger.

Oh! it was a very brief little letter containing only three lines; but those three lines said more than volumes. Here they are: —

"I love you no less than you love me. You offer me your life. I give you mine. Take it, then, and do with it what you will.

"CONSTANCE."

It would seem that the library of Beuzerie must also have contained some beautiful and alluring romance like "L'Astrée," suited to form the heart and mind of a young girl.

Matters had progressed wonderfully, thanks to Henri's ingenuity. As all letters that left the convent were, naturally, previously examined, just as he was setting off for Tours he had feigned indisposition. This delay had given the Augustine boarding-pupils time to re-enter their convent. In this way Herminie and Constance had been able to meet again; and then, on Henri's departure, he had made a farewell visit to his sister, who, as she kissed him, had slipped the little letter from Constance into his hand.

Roger was at peace, then, from that time forth. Any effort on his part would be seconded by Constance. His love was repaid with equal love, and more, with the tenderness and the devotion that constitute the everlasting superiority of woman's love over ours.

The days sped on, while Roger, faithful to his scheme of economy, heaped up his little treasure saved from the parental largess. Twice, to comfort their son in his exile, which he was enduring for that matter with heroic resignation, the baron and the baroness visited Tours. On both occasions the name of Constance was scarcely mentioned. Hence, on their second return to Anguilhem, both baron and baroness were convinced that their son had become perfectly reasonable on that subject.

By the end of six or eight months, therefore, Roger had lulled every suspicion to rest, and, as he had

attained his sixteenth year and completed his course in rhetoric, it was hinted that, if he promised to commit no more follies, he should not be sent back to college. Roger promised whatever they desired.

Roger had turned over and over in his mind a thousand plans of escape, each more unstable than the other. It was no easy thing for any student to escape, and still less so for Roger than for another, since, in addition to the general surveillance of the good Jesuit fathers, he was still under the particular surveillance of Abbé Dubuquoi. At last Roger hit upon a very simple plan, and it had occurred to him last just because of its simplicity.

Like all the pupils who had attained their sixteenth year, or who were in rhetoric or philosophy, Roger had a private room, but in it, for the sake of greater precaution, the abbé slept. True, once asleep, the abbé slept soundly, and there was one most vociferous sign which proclaimed when he was enjoying the very fulness of sleep. In short, and to be brief, the Abbé Dubuquoi possessed the infirmity of snoring.

Here, then, is what Roger, by dint of hard thinking, at last settled upon.

On the night fixed for his flight, Roger would go to bed as usual, and would let the abbé go to bed; but he would take good care to observe where the latter placed his clothes. Then, as he and the abbé were almost of the same size, after the lights were all out, and by the regular snoring of the abbé he felt assured that his guardian was asleep, he would softly rise, array himself in the black breeches, black coat, and bands, cover his head with the dignity of the three-cornered hat, and get out of the room as lightly as possible. In all probability the abbé would not wake until the next morning at six

o'clock, and, in that case, the fugitive would have eight or ten hours the start of any who might attempt to pursue.

As for a pretext to give the porter for going out at such an hour, the pretext was already found. Roger decided, too, that his escape should be made on Wednesday night. He had calculated that he would require three good rests in going from Amboise to Chinon, and, consequently, he would arrive there on Sunday. Once there, he had decided upon nothing very definite, and counted on taking counsel of circumstances. Only, he would present himself to the attendant as an abbé, deliver a letter from Henri to his sister, and, by a certain mark contained in that letter, a mark unintelligible to any one but to her, Constance would know that Roger was at Chinon.

The day of that momentous Wednesday glided by amid keenest anguish on the part of Roger; but he had cherished the plan too long to draw back from it at the moment of execution. He therefore kept face and voice under control; he had the courage to do his theme and his translation. Finally, at supper, he ate as usual and was ordinarily gay. Verily, the chevalier was predestined to romantic adventures, and had received from nature all the qualities requisite for their achievement. At nine o'clock the abbé and the chevalier went to bed. The abbé laid all his clothes on a chair near his bed; then he extinguished the light. At the end of a quarter of an hour he was sleeping heavily.

Roger waited for another quarter of an hour to pass. He cautiously crept out of bed, pausing at every creak it made. Finally, his feet touched the floor; he leaned against the wall and paused a moment. The abbé's snoring continued to make itself heard in dignified

periodicity. All was going well. Then he advanced, his hands extended in the dark, until he touched the chair which, for the time being, was affording clothes-pegs for the entire tutorial wardrobe. He transferred the wardrobe from its chair to his bed, and there began his toilet, which was accomplished without mishap. At last, the toilet complete, Roger, being perfectly transformed from head to foot into an abbé, opened the door as gently as possible, closed it in like manner, listened to discover whether his various movements had won the tutor from his sleep, gained the staircase, descended to the court, where, knocking boldly at the porter's lodge, he declared, —

"It is the Abbé Dubuquoi, Monsieur le Chevalier d'Anguilhem's tutor. Monsieur le Chevalier d'Anguilhem is very ill, and I am going for a doctor."

Half asleep, the porter recognized through the casement the abbé's garb, drew the cord as he muttered something which Roger did not understand, and Roger found himself outside. His first impulse was to run straight ahead, but, after ten minutes of racing, he stopped abruptly; he was about to pitch into the Loire.

There, he took his bearings. He knew that Chinon was nearly twenty-five leagues from Amboise, and that, in order to reach the former town, he had only to follow the river's course. But there were two ways of doing this, along the left bank and along the right. Roger decided in favor of the right bank. That route was longer by three or four leagues, it is true, but it offered him greater security against being overtaken. Thereupon he crossed between decks and walked all night without stopping, arriving at Rouvray about six o'clock in the morning. There, fatigue forced him to make a halt. He had gone eight leagues at a stretch.

He stopped at an inn, threw himself on a bed, and ordered that he should be awakened at ten o'clock. His intention was to set out again as soon as he had breakfasted.

When undressing, Roger became aware that, in addition to his own purse, which he had slipped into one pocket of his waistcoat, he was also in possession of the abbé's purse, which had remained in the other pocket. As the money it contained belonged to his father, Roger, instead of conceiving any scruples, rejoiced greatly at the circumstance which increased his funds by four louis and a half crown, or ninety-nine livres. The chevalier had now the wherewithal to proceed to the end of the world.

While Roger was breakfasting, his host entered to tell him that a boatman who was descending the Loire and seeking passengers all along the route had sent to inquire if he would not like to continue his journey by water. Roger was delighted with the idea, since his trail would more easily be lost by water than by land, a boat's way on a stream being as difficult to discover as any of those ranked by King Solomon, of proverbial and poetic fame, as past finding out.

Roger therefore replied that if his journey would lose nothing in speed by the proposed mode of locomotion, he would accept with the greatest pleasure. The landlord assured him that, far from losing, he would gain, since, by that mode, he could travel day and night. This assurance so won Roger that, although the boat would not leave for two hours, he charged the host to engage his place at once. True, the advantage of travelling all night easily made up the loss of two hours.

However, when the inn-keeper was going away, Roger called him back to learn who were to be his fellow-

passengers on the way. He then found that they were for the most part merchants going to Nantes on business, officers rejoining their garrisons at Brest or Rennes, and Parisians travelling for pleasure. There were none in the list of whom he could be suspicious. The enumeration, therefore, did not cause him to alter his first decision, and he sent the inn-keeper away, telling him that the boatman could count on him.

Toward noon they really set off. The boat, or rather the barge, towed by four strong horses travelling along the bank, went at as good a rate as could be desired; so that, all day long, Roger congratulated himself on having chosen this mode of travel which promised him progress by night not less rapid than that accomplished by daylight. At three o'clock they stopped at Tours for dinner; but, about five o'clock, they proceeded again, and kept up an even speed until night. Questioned as to the distance they could make during the night, the captain answered that on the following morning they would be at Langeais in time for breakfast. On the strength of this promise, Roger wrapped himself in his mantle, lay down on a bench, and went to sleep.

Yet, in spite of the precautions he had taken, Roger was not without uneasiness. His slumber was very much troubled by dreams. It seemed to him that he saw appear on the horizon two horsemen, in one of whom he recognized his father, in the other the Abbé Dubuquoi, who, on seeing the barge, quickened the pace of their horses. The barge, on the contrary, in spite of Roger's entreaties to the master, slackened its speed as much as the horsemen quickened theirs. Finally, they were so near that Roger, still dreaming, thought he had no other resource than to hide himself

in the depths of the hold. He went down, therefore, wedged himself between two casks and waited. In a short time it seemed to him that the motion of the barge not only became still slower, but that it ceased altogether. Then he heard approaching footsteps; then he felt a hand seize him by the collar. He was again a prisoner; he gave a cry and awoke.

His first feeling was one of joy; for, on opening his eyes, he saw that he was still perfectly free. His dream, however, was not all an illusion. The barge had stopped and was at a standstill in mid-stream. Roger went to inquire of the pilot the cause of their lying to, and found him as soundly asleep as any of the passengers. He hesitated a moment about disturbing him; but the situation was too grave for his hesitation to last long. He therefore shook the worthy navigator by the arm, and the latter, muttering at being roused from his slumbers, grumpily answered, as though the event were quite natural, and one, consequently, that nobody had a right to be surprised or disconcerted at, that the barge was stranded on a sand-bank, an accident that always happened three or four times in the trip. This explanation given, the pilot dropped his head again upon the helm, and he was fast asleep.

In fact the Loire was at that period what it still is to-day, one of the most freakish rivers in France. One is never certain of finding her at home. Like that tyrant of antiquity who had twelve bed-chambers, she never sleeps two consecutive nights in the same bed.

So then, they were on a sand-bar, as much as to say that they were threatened with staying there until a rainstorm should come to supply the river with the water that was lacking, or until, by doubling or trebling the number of horses on the tow-line, they should suc-

ceed in clearing the barge from the obstruction which had stopped her course.

By putting one's self for a moment into Roger's place it would not be difficult to imagine the effect that such news would produce upon him. It was already twenty-four hours since he started, and he had made only fifteen or eighteen leagues, that is, he was barely half way. Yet, however critical the situation, there was only one thing to do, and that was to have patience. If, by the next morning, the water had not risen, or if the horses did not succeed in extricating the barge, the chevalier would take the left or the right bank, it mattered little which, and continue his way on foot.

This point decided in his mind, Roger tried to go to sleep, but it was impossible. He remained awake, therefore, thinking of Constance, and considering means of reaching her.

This, on the whole, seemed the easiest way. Were Constance, by means of a letter from Henri de Narcey to his sister, forewarned of Roger's presence, she would, undoubtedly, from that moment hold herself in readiness for any event. By the help of a ladder, Roger would then scale the convent wall, where it ran along a perfectly deserted street. Then, as Constance's window overlooked the garden, she could descend from her window by means of the ladder. Both would then scale the wall and take flight to the nearest village, where any priest would marry them.

While turning over all these ideas again and again in his mind, Roger saw the day begin to dawn. But day came without any alteration in the position of the barge. The entire night had passed without the Loire having found it expedient to rise an inch. The bargemaster, on the other hand, recognizing the insufficiency

of his four animals, had gone to the nearest village in search of reenforcement, and had there secured eight horses, which, added to the first four, made a total of twelve. But, in spite of the combined efforts of the poor beasts and the more than conscientious lashes of the whip which their driver rained upon them, the barge moved no more than if it had struck root in the bottom of the Loire. Two or three hours were thus spent in fruitless efforts.

Roger bit his finger-nails in impatience, nor could he understand the apathy of the passengers by whom he was surrounded, who stolidly and tranquilly discussed the event which so exasperated him, all suggesting plans for their relief which were each more impracticable than the other, and seeming, moreover, satisfied to remain there until a miracle of God should come to extricate them. He was among people who were visibly accustomed to descending the Loire, and, consequently familiar with such occurrences.

Roger sought out the master of the barge, whom he warned that if, in half an hour, the barge was not afloat, he would leap into the water and swim ashore. The captain was very tranquilly breakfasting upon cutlets and Orléans wine. He listened to Roger's speech from beginning to end, and inquired if he had paid his passage. Roger answered by exhibiting his receipt. Thereupon the captain assured him that he was at perfect liberty to act as he saw fit, and he turned away to finish his cutlets and empty his bottle.

Roger was seized with a mad desire to strangle the barge-master. However, as he knew that a murder would only complicate his case, he restrained himself, and went on deck.

He hoped to find the passengers impatient, and thought

to take advantage of their restlessness, and stir up a little mutiny. Consequently he approached the different groups; but, to his great astonishment, he found that instead of busying themselves about the accident, all were engaged in conversation about their own affairs. The politicians were commenting on the conference at Geertruidenberg, the officers were talking of the battle of Malplaquet, and the merchants discussed the tithes-tax. Roger saw that nothing was to be expected from them, and he began to meditate the execution of his threat to the captain of swimming ashore, when he saw five or six boats push off the bank and row toward the barge. They contained natives who came to offer fresh provisions, fruits, and cakes to the stranded passengers, as the savages of the South Sea Islands surround the vessels that wander into the Pacific Ocean.

Roger bought one boat's whole cargo on condition that the boat should at once convey him to land.

The little abbé's departure interrupted the conversations for a short time. A few heads turned to see him descend, and gazed after him a moment as he moved off; but very soon each had returned to his theme, and no one seemed any longer to be concerned about the deserter.

Roger landed opposite Luynes. He had a great mind to gain the town, almost a quarter of a league distant from the river-bank, and see if he could there find a horse, but he thought that it would cause delay. Besides, in taking a horse he must needs take a man, and that would be admitting another into his secret. He therefore decided to continue his journey on foot, and immediately headed for Langeais, where he arrived at seven o'clock in the evening.

There, however great Roger's desire to proceed, he

was obliged to stop and spend the night. He must at least make an hour's halt for supper and a little rest. But how was he to set off again on foot at eight o'clock in the evening? Such a course was liable to arouse suspicions; and besides, our swain had reached the place where he must cross the Loire and proceed inland. Now, as only the cross-roads led from Langeais to Chinon, the chances were ten to one that he would lose his way in the darkness. Willy nilly, therefore, Roger must spend the night at the inn, and that his time might not be lost, by the inn-keeper's aid he thoroughly familiarized himself with the route to be pursued the next morning.

At daybreak, Roger resumed his journey. He hoped, by brisk walking, to be at Chinon about two o'clock in the afternoon. In fact, at nine o'clock he breakfasted at Armentières. By noon, indeed, he stopped at Saint Benoit, and at a few minutes before nine o'clock he saw, at last, the towers and steeples of the much desired town. Far from stimulating his courage, the sight seemed to terrify him. He paused a moment, his legs trembling and his hand pressed against his bosom as if to still the beatings of his heart. Finally he plucked up courage, and, ashamed without doubt of his weakness, he started off at a quickened pace. Fifteen minutes later he had reached Chinon.

Then, as with all stout hearts, the approach of danger aroused the chevalier's spirit. He proceeded directly to the convent, knocked unhesitatingly at the door, and sustaining with the utmost calm the scrutinizing gaze of the attendant, he said, —

"Sister, a Mademoiselle Herminie de Narcey is, I think, in your convent."

"Yes, brother," answered the attendant; "what would you with her?"

"I am charged by Monsieur Henri to give her this letter. Will you have the kindness to present it to her, after, of course, having submitted it, according to rule, to your worthy superior?"

"I will do so at once," replied the attendant. "Alas! poor dear girl, this letter will afford her great pleasure, especially now when she is so sad."

"Sad? and why?" asked Roger with misgivings.

"At the loss of her dearest friend."

"Her dearest friend?" repeated Roger with increas ing alarm; "she has lost her dearest friend, do you say?"

"Ah, *mon Dieu*, yes," answered the attendant, lifting her eyes heavenward. "The Lord lent her to us, and the Lord has taken her away; it is well, for she was an angel."

"But — but — her best friend," cried Roger, wiping away the perspiration that rolled from his brow; "her best friend, if I mistake not, was — "

"Was Mademoiselle de Beuzerie," replied the attendant; "you knew her, perhaps, dear brother?"

"Constance! Constance!" cried the chevalier. "In heaven's name, go on, go on! What has happened to her?"

"She died three days ago," answered the attendant, "and was buried yesterday."

Roger gave an appalling cry, swerved like a man struck by lightning, and would have fallen his whole length on the pavement had he not been caught in the arms of the Baron d'Anguilhem, who at that moment in turn approached to enter the convent.

VI.

IN WHICH WE ARE TOLD THAT THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM WAS SO OVERWHELMED WITH GRIEF AT THE DEATH OF MADEMOISELLE DE BEUZERIE THAT HE RESOLVED TO BECOME A JESUIT.

When the chevalier came to himself, he was lying on a bed in the guest-chamber of an inn, and the Baron d'Anguilhem was sitting by his pillow.

On opening his eyes, he stared about him like a man awaking from sleep and striving to collect his thoughts. Then memory returned. He recalled what had passed at the convent; that, from the lips of the attendant, he had learned of the death of Constance, and how, crushed by the blow, he had fallen into the arms of a man whom he had recognized as his father.

For an instant the chevalier strove to doubt his misfortune; but his own condition, his tutor's clothes lying on a chair, his father, who sat weeping beside him, all were proofs of his misfortune too convincing for him to be able to preserve hope. Turning to the baron, then, with arms outstretched, he cried, —

"Oh! father, I am so unhappy!"

The baron adored his son. He lavished on him all the forms of consolation that are current on such occasions. He reminded him that he was a man, that man was born to suffer, and to this end it was that God had given him strength. It was all good orthodox doctrine; but to it all, however sacred it might be, Roger responded, shaking his head, —

"If my mother were here! if my mother were here!"

"Well, and what would she do that I am not doing?" demanded the baron.

"Oh! she would weep with me!" cried Roger.

And he fell back on his pillow, sobbing aloud.

The baron thought that the best thing to do under the circumstances was to let his son weep his fill. In fact, tears afforded him some relief, and he began to be able to speak of Constance. It was, as one can easily imagine, to multiply questions about her illness and death. The baron merely replied that he knew on the subject only what every one else knew: the young girl had been taken with smallpox, and, in spite of medical science, she had died after six days of suffering.

The chevalier then declared that he wished to visit the convent and see the room in which Constance had lived, and the grave where she lay; that he wished to weep in the one and pray beside the other.

The baron replied that the next morning a *requiem* was to be sung for the repose of the young girl's soul, and if he would promise to conduct himself like a man, and to set out in the afternoon for Anguilhem, he should be present at the *requiem*, and, after leaving the chapel, he should be conducted by the abbess to Constance's cell and then to her tomb.

The chevalier gave his word that he would command himself. As to leaving Chinon, he would do that with all his heart, for he realized how much, in his present condition, he needed his mother's love.

The remainder of the day passed peacefully enough, although sadly. Roger remained in bed, affecting, from time to time, to be asleep. His father, believing that he slept, soon went out on tiptoe, and, finding himself alone, Roger was then able to weep as freely as he wished.

Night fell, and, however unhappy was the chevalier, with the night came a little sleep. He dreamed of Constance, and, strangely enough, instead of beholding the young girl pale and dying on her bed, or white and cold in her coffin, as often as she appeared to him, she seemed to be full of life, with love in her eyes and a smile upon her lips, just as she had been at Anguilhem, at Beuzerie, or at the convent. Then he would awake, his heart beating rapidly; for a few moments, he would doubt his own unhappiness, until the room at the inn, the clerical garb, the step of his father, who occupied the adjoining room, and who, at every sound made by the chevalier, came to the door, all recalled him to the terrible certainty that the death of Constance was itself not a dream.

At daybreak, Roger heard the ringing of the convent bell; it was proclaiming the day's sad rite. Each slow and muffled throb of the tolling bronze found response in the depths of the chevalier's heart.

Another thing distressed him moreover: he had no clothes to wear but those in which he had fled from Amboise, and he could not attend the service dressed like an abbé; his disguise, so grotesque in itself, seemed to square badly with his grief. To run about the country, to carry off Constance in that attire would have worked to a charm, but to listen to the service for the dead and to weep over her tomb, wearing such a costume, would be profanation.

The heart has instinctive delicacies which never lead it astray.

Meanwhile, the baron was entering the chevalier's room, followed by a servant from the château carrying a complete suit of clothes. Thanking his father, Roger asked how he had come by them. The baron replied that the abbé, on arriving at Anguilhem, had

informed the baroness in what equipment her son had escaped, and that the baroness, rightly suspecting that he had run away to see Constance again, and, comprehending her son's embarrassment on reaching Chinon, had immediately sent on this suit. A single fact annoyed Roger: it was that his mother had not brought it herself.

However, the chevalier dressed, for at eight o'clock mass was to be said. To the baron's great astonishment, Roger said not a word to him about Constance. In all his father's answers, the poor lad had been conscious of a degree of coldness and constraint which accorded but ill with the frankness of his own grief. The baron, for his part, dreading, no doubt, to revive his son's regrets, was continually turning the conversation away from the only theme that interested the chevalier. He did not understand that, in crises of the nature of the one that his son was experiencing, the first relief is drawn from tears, and that the way to excite tears is to speak to the sorrowing one of the loss for which they flow.

The baron therefore thought that Roger's affliction was diminished because Roger wept no more. Alas! the tears were flowing inwardly, and falling one by one upon his heart.

Roger set off with his father, and they proceeded to the convent, walking side by side. But, on approaching the door where twice he had presented himself so light of heart, Roger felt the ground swaying beneath his feet; houses, walls, and trees were whirling round him; he was obliged to lean on his father's arm. As for the baron, he was visibly moved, on perceiving which Roger strove to master his own emotion.

On arriving at the door, Roger again met the attendant who had given him the terrible news. Accustomed

as she was to the sight of great human griefs, the poor woman herself seemed affected by the chevalier's pallor and sorrow. And when the latter, as he passed her, secretly slipped a louis into her hand, she could not restrain her tears.

Roger entered the chapel which, a year before, he had entered in such happy-hearted confidence of recognizing Constance's voice from among all the others. A year had passed, and that voice, so pure, so sweet, so thrilling, was hushed; and he was about to listen to all those other voices, among which he would seek in vain for one which now was singing in heaven the praises of the Lord.

The chevalier went to kneel on the very spot where he had knelt a year before, and there, for the first time, he felt that sublime necessity for prayer which comes in times of great grief. There for the first time his soul entered into communion with that other world of which one never catches a glimpse save through a veil of joy or of despair, of which one can conceive only in moments of supreme bliss or of supreme grief.

The entire service passed, and although Roger's tears never ceased to flow down his cheeks, not a sob escaped his breast. Prayer renders weeping easy and soothing.

Mass ended, the baron conducted his son to the superior. Perhaps the worthy nun nursed some rancor toward her nephew for the trick that he had played her before, and that he had quite recently intended to repeat; perhaps she had promised herself to administer some reprimand, kind but stern, for her aspect, at first, was dignified and cold; but she heard a heart-rending cry, —

"O aunt, aunt, why did you let her die?"

She was unable to withstand a grief so real and one which manifested itself by such marked alteration of face and voice. The good superior melted into tears.

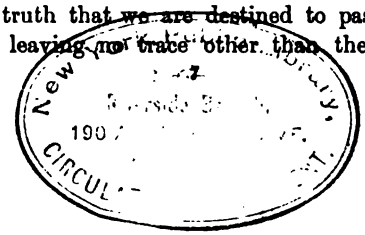
Roger took advantage of her mood to remind his father of the promise he had made to ask his aunt's permission for him to visit Constance's cell. The superior raised some little objection, but yielded after having called a nun and, in a low voice, given her a few orders which were doubtless designed to remove from Roger's sight any object that might further excite his grief.

A few moments later, all three descended; the corridors were deserted. It seemed as if death had at a blow depopulated every cell; the girls were in the garden.

The abbess opened the door of Constance's room, and was preparing, like the baron, to follow Roger; but Roger begged them both to allow him to remain alone a moment within the sanctuary of his love. Father and aunt exchanged glances; then, doubtless, seeing no impropriety in his request, they gave a sign to Roger that he might enter.

Roger went in, closed the door behind him that he might be alone, and advanced reverently and with clasped hands toward the bed on which Constance had breathed her last sigh. Nothing indicated that death had passed that way. The chevalier bent over the virgin pillow to imprint thereon a kiss. It still exhaled an odor of the sweet and delicate fragrance that emanates from youth and health. One would have said that she who had left it three days ago for the tomb, had gone out but that very morning to run with tossing hair about some meadow all strewn with flowers and variegated with butterflies and bees.

This contrast between the place and the scene there enacted, of which nothing seemed to have preserved a trace, broke Roger's heart. Thus came home to him the great truth that we are destined to pass away from the earth leaving no trace other than the memory re-



tained by those who have loved us; and yet, how short a time do the most deeply wounded hearts preserve that memory!

Roger vowed that in his the memory of Constance should live forever.

Then he arose, examined one after another all the objects comprising the furnishing of that little room, whose picture he wished his mind to retain. At the left of the entrance, against the wall, were a crucifix and a prie-dieu; on the prie-dieu lay Constance's tiny missal. Roger went and knelt before the prie-dieu, kissed the little volume, opened it at the place where the book-mark showed it to have been opened last, and read the prayer that Constance had undoubtedly read. It was the angelic salutation, the "Ave Maria," that sweet and poetic promise of an angel to a virgin, of heaven to earth, of God to man.

The fireplace was opposite. On the mantel were two porcelain vases overflowing with flowers which, thanks to the water that fed their stems, had survived her who had plucked them. Between the two vases shone a little mirror, a worldly infringement of the convent rules, but one that the superior permitted such of her inmates as were destined to re-enter the world. Roger culled a pansy from each of the half-wilted bouquets, and pressed his lips to the mirror which, unfaithful and forgetful like the rest, was ready to reflect any new face that might pass before it, without retaining a shadow of the angelic one that it had so often reflected.

From the mantel, Roger advanced to the window. As we have said, the window overlooked the garden. It was the one that he had already seen; the young girls gathered there were the same, but with what a difference! Buoyant and gay before, they were now silent

and sad. They did not play; they walked in groups and in retired spots. Alone, quite alone, walked Herminie de Narcey, the faithful friend of poor Constance.

This last sight was the most terrible of all for Roger. There, on those young hearts, those virgin souls, blank pages of the book of life, as yet scarcely opened, was the real impress of the death whose traces Roger had vainly been seeking within; there was the void left in the air by the dove in its heavenward flight.

Just then the door opened. More than a half-hour had elapsed since Roger had entered Constance's room, and, as he did not emerge, his father and his aunt were fearful of some new misfortune brought on by too violent emotion.

With breaking heart Roger left the little room, feeling that he was taking forth memories for a whole lifetime, and yet he was outwardly so calm that, upon asking his aunt, in accordance with the baron's late agreement, to allow him to visit the tomb of Constance, not only did neither the baron nor the superior make any objection, but both offered to accompany him thither.

The convent burial-ground was within the cloister. Roger had therefore barely a hundred steps to take on leaving the room in which Constance had reposed for a time to reach the abode where she would sleep forever. At the entrance of the cloister, as at the door of her room, Roger asked to be alone; grief is devout, tears are ashamed. Alone, then, Roger entered the little graveyard.

Here, as in all convents, was a quadrangle surrounded by columned arcades, enclosing a plot of turf-covered ground whose surface was embossed all over with graves more or less salient, according as the interval elapsed had allowed them to become more or less sunken. On such

a spot especially is felt the march of time, the great leveller under whose tread gradually crumble away the palaces of the living and the tombs of the dead. Slowly Roger advanced toward a mound that was freshly rounded and covered by a slab on which there had not yet been time to inscribe a name. There was no mistaking it, and it was plain that the grave dated from the day named as that of Constance's burial. Roger knelt beside the stone and prayed.

This was his final ordeal, and it lasted until the baron and the superior came for him. He had said good-by to the chapel where Constance had prayed, to the room in which she had lived, to the tomb where she was laid to rest forever. There was nothing to keep him longer at Chinon; so Roger let them lead him away like a child, and after mechanically taking leave of his aunt, he got into the cariole in which his father had travelled, not unresistingly, merely, but even without uttering a word. The journey was more quickly made than the first. In coming, the baron had changed horses three times on the way, at Loches, at Sainte Maure, and at l'Ile Bouchard, so that there was no occasion for delay; at each of these places a fresh horse was taken, and by noon of the next day they were at Anguilhem.

During the entire journey, Roger had remained absorbed in the profoundest apathy, without a tear, without a sigh, and almost without feeling. On meeting his mother again, however, the poor child found his tears; but the shock had been too violent; on that same evening fever manifested itself, and Roger fell seriously ill.

Then, in all its admirable devotion was displayed that mother's love, so many proofs of which the baroness had already given her son. As long as Roger was ill, she never left his bedside for a moment, sitting with

him by day, watching beside him at night, speaking of Constance without ceasing, praying and weeping with him, fusing her soul with his, divining all his feelings, anticipating every desire, having no life but his life, no will but his will. Sometimes, when she thought him asleep, Roger would surprise her gazing on him with an expression of infinite tenderness in which he seemed to detect a blending of grief and remorse. Twenty times was he on the point of questioning her as to the peculiar expression that he detected in her eyes; but Roger had not strength enough to be curious. What mattered all the world to him? Constance was not there.

The chevalier's illness was long; then it insensibly drifted into a sombre melancholy more dangerous than the malady whose place it took, for Roger abandoned himself to this melancholy, and, after having submitted to every form of treatment that had been prescribed for the cure of his physical disease, he would do nothing to cure that of his mind. In vain his father proposed riding, hunting, fencing. All the sports of which he had formerly been passionately fond now wearied him to the point of inspiring disgust. His studies were his sole diversion; and, one fine day, to the great amazement of his father and mother, Roger asked to go back to the college of the Jesuits of Amboise.

Whatever sorrow they might have felt at thought of parting with their son in his present state of mind, the baron and the baroness nevertheless welcomed his request with joy. It proved that Roger was again taking up an interest in life. It had been three months since he had expressed any desire whatever, hence his request was met with no denial.

Roger returned then to Amboise, still under the care of his tutor. This time, his father and his mother accom-

panied him, the baroness having desired to make the journey that she might in person commend her son to the reverend Jesuit fathers.

A great disappointment awaited Roger. He had re-entered college during the vacation and had fully expected, at the re-opening, to see his friend Henri de Narcey return; but he waited for him in vain. Henri had completed his course in rhetoric, and his parents, having destined him for the bar, had not thought it best that he should take philosophy. Roger therefore found himself completely isolated with his sorrow.

Then a religious fervor developed within him, no trace of which had manifested itself before the event that had brought it forth from the depths of his heart. Roger passed whole hours within the chapel, praying until he would fall into a kind of ecstasy that usually terminated in a flood of tears. The reverend fathers very soon perceived this tendency, not toward devotional exercises, — Roger was not a practical devotee, he forgot even the hours of the services, to which he had almost always to be summoned, — but toward pious reverie. They comprehended what an excellent recruit for the order would be an exalted soul like that of their young guest, attended by a fertile mind, and one that, in all likelihood, would recover later all the vigor that it had momentarily lost; thus, every kindness, every enticement, every flattery beset Roger. There is an infatuation in religion for young and tender hearts. Roger, to whom Constance had become an angel, directed all his longing toward heaven. The rector was an ingratiating, adroit, eloquent man, fired with that zeal of proselytism which is nowhere so pronounced as in the order of which Ignatius Loyola was the founder. He sent for Roger, sounded his feelings, strengthened his inclination, and managed so successfully

that one fine morning at the end of six months Roger announced to his tutor that he had firmly resolved to join the order of the Jesuits.

As the Abbé Dubuquoi was a member of the order, and as the plan of sending Roger to the college at Amboise had been of his own suggesting, fear seized him lest the chevalier's parents should think that he had been the one to inspire his pupil with this singular notion of taking the vows. Hence he immediately wrote to the baron of what was on foot, begging him to come without loss of time, if he wished to arrive before the reverend fathers had quite taken possession of his son's mind.

The baron realized at a glance the danger threatening Roger; he put Christopher to the cart, and the next morning found him at Amboise.

VII.

HOW MADEMOISELLE DE BEUZERIE APPEARED BEFORE THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM TO DISSUADE HIM FROM TAKING THE VOWS.

THE baron found Roger quite cool and very determined. If the project that he had conceived had been the result of excitement, the baron would have entertained some hope that, when the excitement had passed away, the desire engendered of it would have vanished with it; but it was not so, and the matter was becoming very serious, the more serious because of its having occurred at this period of the reign of Louis XIV., or rather of Madame de Maintenon, when all things revolved about religion, and when such powerful protection was given to the heads of churches or the superiors of convents that, in many instances, young men and women of the first families of France had become monks and nuns in spite of the opposition of their relatives. The baron, therefore, could think of no better plan to adopt with the chevalier than persuasion.

And so he tried that; but to all the baron's pleas, Roger responded that he was obeying an inner voice, that it was the voice of conscience, and that, from the moment of losing the only being that held him to earth, he had felt himself drawn by an irresistible vocation.

The baron then addressed the rector of the college and solicited his help to combat the chevalier's resolve; but the rector replied that he would regard it as an offence in

the sight of God to lead away from heaven a soul that was seeking salvation. Therefore all that could be extracted from him was that he would refrain from inciting Roger forward on the course upon which he had of his own accord entered; that he had, moreover, imposed this restraint on himself up to this time, and that he should continue to do so. The baron really could ask no more.

Three or four days were spent in fruitless effort. Finally, toward evening on the fifth day, there came a letter from the baroness who, informed by her husband as to the state of affairs, wrote to entreat the chevalier that he would come and spend a fortnight at Anguilhem before decisively making up his mind, promising the neophyte that if, at the end of this time his determination still held out, she would leave him free to follow his wishes. This request was too motherly and too reasonable for Roger not to accede to it at once.

The next day, after having received the rector's blessing, the future Jesuit set out for Anguilhem in company with the baron and the abbé, the last two cursing from the bottom of their hearts the fatal day when Mademoiselle de Beuzerie first set foot at Anguilhem. Indeed, since that unlucky day, it was plain that everything had been at sixes and sevens in the home until then so tranquil, and whose inmates, formerly the most staid in the province, were now spending their time chasing each other up and down the highways of the land.

The baroness renewed the arguments already tried by the baron; but, despite all her motherly persuasion, she could not vanquish the chevalier's obstinacy. On the other hand, it was in vain that his father talked to him of hunting, riding, and fencing; to all these worldly incitements Roger would reply that they were profane

exercises, not at all becoming in a man who intended to consecrate himself to the Lord. After this rebuff, the baroness, too, began to despair of restoring to her son's mind the ideas which he had formerly entertained as to a gentleman's future, and which the fatal event that we have just related seemed to have effaced from his mind.

Thus, twelve days went by, during which the baroness renewed her pleading, but always in vain. At last she herself had apparently renounced all hope, and Roger was freed from her motherly besetments which, however, he had met with a firmness ever tempered with respect and veneration. The whole of the thirteenth day, therefore, passed in sadness and very nearly in silence; for, as Roger's intention had been the never-ending topic of conversation from the time of his arrival at Anguilhem, as soon as they ceased to speak of that, they knew not of what to speak.

The evening was quieter and more melancholy even than the day had been, and each retired early to his own room. As usual, Roger said his prayer before a large picture representing Christ on Mount Calvary, which, on his last return, already occupied with religious ideas, he had had brought into his bed-chamber from an ancient chapel in the château which had been converted to the uses of a ground-floor cellar. Then, wrought up into one of the fervid ecstasies that sometimes took possession of him after his prayer, he got into bed and very soon fell into that state of somnolence which is neither waking nor sleeping.

On extinguishing his light, Roger had remarked a circumstance due no doubt to chance, but which in his pious fervor he had attributed to one of those special favors which he believed heaven sometimes granted him. A ray of moonlight, falling through an oval aperture made in

the upper part of the shutter that closed his window, lighted up the sacred scene of the picture, placed exactly opposite the foot of his bed. It was with eyes fixed on this picture that Roger had let himself sink gradually into that religious rapture of which we have spoken and which began to fade into somnolence, when it seemed to him that the picture was turning of itself and that a young girl, covered with a long white robe and with veiled face, was substituted, by a slow and almost insensible motion, for the sacred picture; then, when the painting had completely disappeared and the nocturnal ray that had illuminated it shone on the young girl with its soft light, the apparition gently raised her veil, and Roger, trembling with both joy and fear, recognized Constance.

It was indeed she, it was indeed that charming daughter of earth become an angel of heaven; and Roger's first movement was to rise in bed and extend his arms to her, but by a wave of the hand, the shade signified to the youth that he must remain where he was, and in a voice whose every tone vibrated to the depths of her lover's heart, she said, —

"Roger, I have been permitted to come and say that the sacrifice you wish to make to my memory is too great. It is not your destiny to bury yourself in a cloister, but to hand down the name of your fathers which would die with you; therefore renounce, I entreat you, this idea of taking the vows, and if need be, I command you. Adieu, Roger, remember what I say; for I have spoken the will of the Lord."

At these words, a movement the reverse of that which had brought the white vision to Roger's view took place, and, regaining the position that it had for a moment left, the picture was again seen in the light.

Roger had remained breathless, his brow damp with perspiration and his eyes wildly staring, as long as the vision lasted; but scarcely had it disappeared when, doubting his senses, he leaped out of bed in order to assure himself by touching it that the picture was indeed in its place. Nothing was altered. His hands ran over the frame, the canvas, the wainscoting, and he convinced himself that no one could either have entered or left the room, fastened as it was from within. It was truly then the spirit of Constance that had appeared to him.

We can imagine what the remainder of the night was to Roger. As long as it was dark, he had no doubt as to the reality of the vision; she was there still, present to his sight. He saw again the pale sweet face of his young friend; he heard her gentle voice; he felt, so to speak, reaching toward him, that hand whose imperative movement had commanded his silence and quiescence, and whose gentle gesture had bade him adieu. But, whatever the young man's faith and trust, when the tints of dawn came to chase from his room the solemn and mysterious obscurity of the night, the stones of the fanciful castle erected in a dream fell one by one, and he passed from the profoundest conviction to the most absolute incredulity.

Yet, during the day he was restless, dreamy, preoccupied. Several times his mother inquired what cause had brought about the change visible in him since the day before, but the baroness obtained no answer save a wan smile full of melancholy. As for the baron, he seemed to have resigned himself to the chevalier's determination, and to have lost all hope of inducing him to renounce his project.

The day passed, however, without anything unusual

occurring. Roger left the château and went for a walk in the little wood surrounding it. Occasionally, quick blushes suffused his countenance, as if the blood were suddenly rushing from his heart to his face; occasionally he would give a start, and his eyes would seem to follow through the grove a fleeing shadow, visible to him alone; then, suddenly, a deep sigh would escape him and two great tears fall from his eyes. That was much for Roger, since, for more than six months, he had not been known to weep.

Roger waited for night with an uneasiness that was mingled with dread. More than once, during the evening meal, his mother, who did not take her eyes from him, saw him furtively wipe away the perspiration that beaded his forehead. At the same hour as on the day before, he asked to be allowed to retire, and he left the dining-room for his bed-chamber.

We have told how, with the daylight, doubt, then incredulity, and finally, the conviction that his spiritual visitant was but a dream, had succeeded each other in Roger's mind; but, in contrary train, with the approach of night, his heart began to resume its faith, and, when he found himself alone in his room, lying in bed, his light extinguished, when he again saw the same moonlight illumine the same picture, all his former certainty returned and the supposed dream again enforced on him its reality.

There was almost an hour of silence, during which nothing stirred and Roger heard only the beating of his heart. For an hour his burning eyes were unavailingly fixed upon the motionless picture; then suddenly the frame seemed to merge into the wainscoting and, as on the night before, the picture receded from his sight. After a moment there was no more doubt, for he began

to distinguish the white robe of Constance, then the young girl distinctly appeared; the miracle of the previous night had again been wrought.

"Roger," she said, "you have not believed my words, and I am permitted to come and repeat them. Roger, abandon this melancholy resolution which brings despair to your family. Roger, I accept not the sacrifice that you would make. You are born for the world and not for the cloister; live for the world and be happy."

Then, as if this time the vision still feared lest doubt should come to efface the impression made by her presence, she detached from her girdle a cluster of pansies like that she had in life let fall in the corridor of the convent at Chinon; and, with the gesture made in waving adieu, she let it fall to the floor.

Roger sprang from his bed; but already the picture was in its place. Not a trace remained of the maiden's apparition, unless it were the bunch of pansies which with an impulse, full at once of joy and fear, an impulse, we must confess, infinitely more worldly than pious, the chevalier carried to his lips.

There was no room for doubt this time; a material, visible, tangible proof of the gracious phantom's passage had remained in Roger's hands. The young man returned to his bed pressing the flowers to his heart, and still expecting some new apparition. But it was in vain.

He was awake with the day. This time, as before, his first impulse was to believe that he had dreamed; but the flowers were there in his hand, faded, but present. Ah! this time, the matter presented an aspect very different from yesterday's; the shade of Constance, wrested from her tomb by a miracle of love, had really been present with him.

On the morrow, Roger was to set out on his return to Amboise; but would the gracious apparition dare to follow him to Amboise, into the midst of that formidable assemblage of black-robed men? Would not going back be to disobey the orders of those lips that he had so loved?

But how could he retract a determination so publicly signified? How, after having resisted every entreaty of his father and his mother, could he himself suggest prolonging his stay at Anguilhem? It was impossible, worse than impossible, it was ridiculous; and Roger, let us say, for it is not our purpose to be eternally sounding his praises, was possessed of almost as much self-respect as love.

The day passed then in mutual constraint. The baron, as usual, seemed reconciled to the separation; but the poor mother did not lose sight of her son. It was plain that only the fear of another refusal restrained her pleadings. On his side, Roger wished nothing better than to be detained; the result was that only an opportunity was needed for them to come to an understanding. The Abbé Dubuquoi supplied the opportunity by asking his pupil at what hour he intended to depart on the next day. Roger endeavored to answer and stammered; the baroness at once threw her arms around his neck, asking if it were really true that he was still determined to forsake her. Then Roger was unable to restrain his tears, tears at once of grief and joy, and, in a low, submissive voice, but to us who know the motive by which he was actuated, full of hypocrisy, he said, —

"Madame, are you not my mother, and should I not obey you? Command me, then, and I will obey."

The baroness uttered a cry of joy, and hastened through the house proclaiming to all whom she met that her son

would not go until later, and perhaps he would not go at all.

Roger left his parents at the same hour as on the previous evening; he was in haste to return to his room. This time, however, he entered it with a greater, a far more terrible doubt. The phantom had seemed to read his thought, since, on the preceding night, it had come to dissipate his hesitations. Therefore, now that all uncertainty was gone, now that he had indeed decided to follow the commands given him by the spirit of Constance, now that he had even promised his mother that he would not go away, might not the phantom think its mission accomplished, and consider it needless to appear again? It was an anxious thought. Roger was becoming accustomed to that lovely shade, which was at least some amends in default of the substance.

And so, once shut up in his room, Roger lost no time in getting into bed and extinguishing his light; but the moon had begun to wane, so that the illuminating beam, which the night before had been late, was this evening later still. At last, after having lighted up in succession the corner of the room and then the frame, it settled upon the picture: it was the moment so impatiently awaited by the chevalier. Never did invocation fall more earnestly from lips of enchanter than did that which escaped the poor chevalier's when beseeching Constance to appear again, if only for a last time. And the chevalier's prayer was granted.

This time again, as on the night before, and the night before that, the picture disappeared, and the white vision came in its place. Roger uttered a cry of joy.

"Yes, it is I," said the apparition; "it is I, come to say adieu. Adieu, then! You have obeyed the will of the Lord; may the Lord recompense you. Adieu, adieu!"

And while the phantom was disappearing with these words, it seemed to the chevalier that he heard two or three badly stifled sobs, which proved that the dead regretted the new separation as much as the living.

"Oh! no, no!" cried Roger, springing out of bed; "oh! no, not adieu, not adieu! Oh, if I thought I should never see you again, Constance, Constance, I should go mad!"

And Roger fell on his knees at the foot of the picture, his hands held out to the Saviour, entreating him who had suffered to have pity on him who was suffering.

But Roger was invoking only a senseless picture, a speechless canvas. He was alone; the last vibrations of Constance's voice were extinguished; the shade had disappeared.

Then he regained his bed, quite overcome with grief; he had heard Constance's adieu; what he dreaded had happened. That appearance was the last, the stone had fallen back upon the tomb, the stone would never be lifted again.

It seemed to Roger as if he were losing Constance a second time. He passed more than an hour in a state of feverish agitation amounting almost to despair. That thrice repeated adieu, the last two spoken with sobs, kept ringing in his ears, and, without knowing what he spoke, he himself repeated involuntarily, —

"Adieu! adieu!"

Suddenly it seemed to Roger that a sound of light footsteps, an almost inaudible sound, a sound that might betray a sylph walking over the flowers, came from the other side of the wainscoting. Roger rose in bed, despairing, hoping, and trembling at once, his eyes fixed on the picture, now left in obscurity; but, in spite of the dim light, it seemed to him that the frame, which alone stood out in the night,

was again moving; soon he doubted no longer, the picture was turning.

Constance appeared for the second time; but this time the apparition left the wainscoted wall, and springing lightly to the floor, ran toward the youth, crying, —

"Roger! Roger! I am not dead. Roger! I am not the spirit of Constance! I am Constance herself!"

And, simultaneously, the chevalier, almost mad with joy, became sensible of the fact that it was indeed no ghost but a living being that he was holding in his arms.

VIII.

HOW IT WAS LEARNED AT ANGUILHEM AND AT BEUZERIE THAT THE VICOMTE DE BOUZENOIS, EX-CAPTAIN OF THE FRIGATE THETIS, HAD DIED INTESTATE, AND WHAT MODIFICATIONS THE NEWS WROUGHT IN THE PLANS OF THE TWO FAMILIES.

In few words, Constance acquainted Roger with what had taken place.

The time which our fugitive had lost in travelling from Amboise to Chinon had given the Abbé Dubuquoi ample time to hasten to Anguilhem and inform the baron and the baroness of the chevalier's new escapade. Thereupon they had rightly conjectured that he was headed for Chinon, and they had considered plans for putting an end to this amorous waywardness which bade fair to leave the parents of the two young people not a moment's repose. The Abbé Dubuquoi had then conceived the happy inspiration of proposing to the baron that Roger should be made to believe that Constance was dead. The baroness, understanding with her mother's heart that such unexpected news would prostrate her son with grief, had for a long time held out against the fraud. Finally she was obliged to yield to the plausible reasoning of her husband, and the baron had set off to take the mother superior into the plot. As it chanced, a nun had died but two days before. Thus every facility was presented for the execution of the plan.

We have seen how the plan was carried out.

But what they had not been able to foresee was the intensity of the grief excited in the chevalier by this news; and what they had especially been unable to predict was the final decision to which his grief had led.

So, when the news reached Anguilhem that Roger wished to become a Jesuit, the baron and the baroness were reduced to the depths of despair. As we have seen, the baron set out immediately for Amboise, hoping that his paternal influence would restore the chevalier to more rational ideas; but, after the first conversation held with his son, the baron had seen that the resolution was thoroughly grounded in the chevalier's mind, and that nothing in the world would uproot it.

He at once wrote to the baroness to acquaint her with the desperate certainty at which he had just arrived.

And then the baroness also had formed a scheme, — one inspired by her motherly heart, — which was to call to her aid Constance, whom the chevalier believed to be dead, to command the unhappy boy to relinquish his foolish intention. She herself had repaired to Beuzerie. She had so pleaded with the viscountess, so entreated the viscount, that neither was able to withstand the baroness' tears, and they consented that their daughter should seem to return from the other world in order to restore the chevalier to this.

Then the baroness had written to her husband, asking him to exact, at least, that the chevalier should return and spend a fortnight at Anguilhem before taking a final resolution, a request that Roger had been unable to deny his father. We have seen how the first twelve days passed at Anguilhem, and how the chevalier's obstinacy had rendered the intervention of Constance indispensable.

Everything had gone as the parents had desired. The piece of mechanism, prepared by the most skilful carpenter in Loches, had worked to perfection. The baron and the baroness had closely followed the impression made on their son by the successive apparitions of Constance; the third had finally completed the work of the first two. Constance, occupying a room with her mother in one of the remotest corners of the château, had with tears in her eyes and despair in her heart said her last adieux to Roger, when, her grief sweeping away every other consideration, she had herself taken a firm resolve and, profiting by her mother's slumber, she had risen, dressed herself again, gone out on tiptoe, and, rid of the surveillance of those who until then had dictated her speech and curbed her feelings, she sped from corridor to corridor to the place in the wainscoting where she had been accustomed to take her stand, pushed the spring, and appeared to the chevalier, no longer as a shadow, but as an entrancing reality.

Roger was a youth of quick impulses. Dazed for a moment, — as if a dead man should be dragged from his grave, and, on suddenly opening his eyes, he should again behold the sky and find himself restored to life and happiness, — he had only enough strength not to fall crushed beneath the weight of his joy; but, that moment gone, he saw that the opportunity, so long sought by him, had come of its own accord, unique, sudden, fleeting, and he instantly resolved not to let it escape him.

A moment later the chevalier was ready. As for Constance, she had written her lover that her life belonged no longer to herself but to him, and that it was for him to dispose of it. When, therefore, he proposed that they should that very instant fly together, and gain

the nearest village where they could be married, not only did she offer no objection, but she assured him that she was ready to follow him to the end of the earth. The chevalier no longer doubted that he was at last entering upon the conclusion of his romance.

The two immediately set out, gliding along the corridors and down the staircase as noiselessly as two shadows, and at last they reached the court. Roger ran to the stable, saddled Christopher, who had for some time been resting from his past fatigues, but who, always kind and docile, allowed himself to be handled without resistance. Then he partly opened the great gate as quietly as possible, sprang upon Christopher, made Constance get up on a stone block, and forced the horse close enough for her to mount behind him. Then, when the maiden was well established, Roger set off at a gallop.

They kept up this gait for two hours; but, as it was in the month of July, that is, when the days are the longest of the year, at the end of those two hours daylight had begun to appear. Roger then thought it expedient to diminish his speed, since a youth and maiden riding at full gallop must excite suspicion. He observed at the same time, on their right, a village which he recognized as La Chapelle-Saint-Hippolyte, and he turned in the direction of this village.

Of matrimonial procedure Roger had no knowledge but what he had extracted from the fiction of the day. Now, in the romantic tales of the time, all marriages opposed by the parents were solemnized without their knowledge by some good priest of the village, who, acting upon the letter of the Lord's commandment given to our forefathers to increase and multiply, believed himself to be obeying the precept of the Bible in sanctifying as

many marriages as possible. Full of confidence, therefore, Roger proceeded to the parsonage, and, having knocked at the door, which was opened by a plump, kind-looking housekeeper of thirty-five or forty years, he asked to speak with the curé.

The curé was getting ready to say mass, which to Roger seemed a good omen. He explained as briefly as possible to the curé what had brought them, and asked if he could not perform the marriage ceremony forthwith. The good priest smiled at the young man's haste; but he explained that there were a few preparatory formalities to be gone through with, such as confessing, giving their family and baptismal names, swearing that they were not related in any degree prohibited by the church, etc., etc.; that these formalities always necessitated a delay of twenty-four or thirty-six hours; that, consequently, however good his own will in the matter, the marriage blessing could not be pronounced until the morrow or the day after. However, while waiting, the two young people might stay at the parsonage, Roger in the charge of the curé, and Constance in that of his housekeeper. This mischance was very distasteful to Roger, as he insisted most emphatically; but the curé was inflexible and, as he declared that none of his fellow curés would be any more tractable than himself, Roger preferred staying at La Chapelle-Saint-Hippolyte rather than going to another village, a course which, without affording him prompter opportunities, would expose him to recognition, or, at least, to notice.

The curé then went to say mass; and, as he seemed to share Roger's fears, he cautioned the two children against being seen at either door or window. Then, on his return, he proceeded to the usual questions

The young man declared that his own name was Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem, and that the young girl's was Aglaé Constance de Beuzerie; that the former was aged seventeen years and five months; the latter, fifteen years lacking eight days. Moreover, they both took oath that they were neither co-sponsors nor cousins nor related, in short, in any degree whatever.

The curé then told them to prepare for confession, each making examination of his conscience, while he himself went to attend to some urgent duties.

On his return the two confessions took place. Needless to say they were those of two children, pure and chaste, and, while confessing the love that until then had led them into such foolish enterprises, neither of them had cause to blush even for a thought.

The double confession seemed completely to reassure the good curé, who until then had not appeared quite free from some uneasiness. Then, under the pretext that it was essential that the two young souls should sin neither in thought nor deed nor by omission during the interval which separated the absolution and the marriage ceremony, he shut Roger in the study that contained his ecclesiastical library, and Constance in his housekeeper's room.

At dinner, however, the two young people came together again. Roger then asked the curé if he thought he could marry them on the next day, to which the worthy man replied that he saw no difficulty unless some obstacle were meanwhile to intervene. This assurance somewhat allayed Roger's uneasiness, and enabled him after dinner to withdraw to the library without much difficulty. There he found a cot which had been made up while he was at table.

The hour of supper arrived. As in the morning, the

two young people again found themselves face to face. Roger was beaming with happiness. After the miracle of resurrection that had been effected, he thought separation no longer possible. Constance was shy and blushing; but joy glinted in luminous sparks from her drooping eyelids; happiness forced a passage with every word that escaped her lips.

After supper the curé said prayers for every one. Then, prayers being over, each retired to his own apartment.

Roger tried to read; but how can one read when a thought goes thrilling through the heart, sweeter, tenderer, more tuneful than any other thought on earth! And yet he read that wondrous poem, the love of Jacob and Rachel; but he discovered that Rachel was of small consequence in comparison with Constance, and he confessed to himself that to deserve Constance he ought to undergo many other proofs than those to which Jacob had been subjected. And besides, it was a way to pass the time quickly, to spend it in dreaming. Eleven o'clock sounded, and at each solemn and measured stroke of the clock, Roger trembled as he thought that in eight hours he would be the husband of Constance.

That sweet thought accompanied him to bed and pursued him during his sleep. He dreamed that it was day, and that some one had entered his room to say that the priest was waiting only for him. Just then it seemed to Roger that he really did see daylight through his half-shut eyelids, and that several voices were speaking loudly near him. The feeling was so real that Roger awoke, and, opening his eyes, found himself face to face with his father.

At sight of him Roger's countenance assumed an ex-

pression of despair that however thoroughly prepared the baron might have been to administer a severe reprimand to the confirmed runaway, he had not the heart to do it, and already discerning the suffering of the man in that poor child's soul, he was satisfied to hold out his hand, as he pronounced the one word, —

"Courage!"

Perhaps Roger might have resisted reproaches, but he could not hold out against indulgence. He cast himself into the baron's arms, asking him if he was going to take him away from Constance. The baron regarded him fixedly, and seeing the anxiety depicted on every feature, he said, —

"Listen: my first word was courage! my second shall be hope!"

"O father, father!" cried Roger; "I have already been so cruelly deceived, that I really can hope no longer."

"But when we deceived you, Roger," said the baron, "we were poor, while now —"

"Now, father, are we rich?"

"Possibly," replied the baron.

"Possibly!" cried Roger, "possibly! What do you mean, father? How can our fortune have changed in a day?"

"Our cousin the Vicomte de Bouzenois is dead. We received the news this morning, the baroness and I."

"Died naming us his heirs?" eagerly demanded Roger.

"If that were the case, I should not have said that possibly we were rich. I should have said that we were rich to a certainty. The viscount died intestate."

"Intestate, father?"

"Yes, intestate, chevalier."

The baron pronounced the word with such emphatic deliberation that the chevalier thought it must be of the highest importance.

"Then what follows?" asked the young man in a faltering voice, for he did not yet see how the death of Monsieur de Bouzenois brought him nearer to Constance.

"This, monsieur," replied the baron. "The succession is open, and is disputed with us only by a son of a former marriage, who pretends that his mother gave her property to Monsieur de Bouzenois only on condition that the entire fortune should revert to himself."

"Well, father?"

"Well, the documents are in the hands of the public administrator. A lawsuit will follow; but Coquenard, my attorney, writes me that we cannot lose the suit if we push it with ever so little activity and intelligence, and, if we gain this lawsuit —"

"If we gain the lawsuit, father —"

"We shall have an income of seventy-five thousand livres, nothing less; and then, Monsieur de Beuzerie does the courting and we do the looking down from the height of grandeur; we, in short, make the sacrifice, in forming an alliance with him."

"O father, father, what hope you hold out!" cried Roger; "what! do you believe, do you think —"

"I know what I believe; I know what I think," said the baron. "The kind curé whom you took into your confidence expedited a messenger to Beuzerie as well as to Anguilhem. Consequently, I met the viscount three leagues from here, hastening after his daughter, just as I was hurrying after you. He was furious at what had happened; but, at the first word I breathed to him of Maître Coquenard's letter he was much appeased.

and has even permitted it to appear that, after the scandal to which your flight with his daughter would not fail to give rise in the neighborhood, he regarded beforehand his marriage project with the Comte de Croisey as broken off."

"O father, father, what are you saying?"

"You understand, monsieur," replied the baron, "it was an appeal to my honor."

"And what did you say, father?"

"I said that between ourselves, as gentlemen, a title was only a title, that the name was everything, and that it was known throughout the province that, although the d'Anguilhems were only barons, they dated from the first crusades, while at the beginning of our great king's reign, the Comte de Croisey's grandfather had been at great pains to prove that he was qualified to enter His Majesty's stables; which was the same as saying that if the Baronne d'Anguilhem were presented at court, she would certainly take precedence of the Marquise de Croisey."

"What did he say?"

"He held out his hand and answered, 'That is true, baron; we will talk of that again.'"

"O monsieur! O father!" exclaimed Roger, "how good you are! And Constance, where is Constance?"

"Constance is with her father, as I am with you. Constance will return to Beuzerie, as we shall return to Anguilhem. I shall pay a visit to the viscount tomorrow, and then we shall talk all this over."

"O father!" said Roger, "lay great stress on my love; say that I adore Constance; say that I cannot live without her; say that — say that I shall die if they take her away from me, say —"

"I shall say that, in all probability, you will one day

have an income of seventy-five thousand livres, and believe me, monsieur, such eloquence will outweigh yours."

"Say what you will, dear father, but obtain an answer from the viscount."

"In this matter let me act," said the baron; "for, rest assured, I know better than you what course to take."

"And — and — " stammered Roger.

"And what?" asked the baron.

"And Constance?"

"Well, and Constance?"

"Shall I not see her again?"

"That, monsieur, is quite impossible. You can now see Mademoiselle de Beuzerie only under the paternal roof, and with the consent of the viscount and the viscountess."

"And do you think, monsieur," ventured Roger, timidly, "that their consent will be long in coming?"

"In three or four days, I hope."

"In three or four days!" said Roger; "alas! that is a very long time."

"And when you thought never to see her again, it was a much longer time, it seems to me."

"And, too," added Roger, "I wished to become a Jesuit."

"Yes, yes, monsieur," said the baron, "yes, I know it, indeed. You had quantities of ideas, each more ingenious than the other; oh! you are a man of resources! We will give your imagination something to do."

"In what way, father?"

"We will tell you at Anguilhem."

And, without the chevalier's being able to gain any

enlightenment from the baron on the scheme in which he seemed to be the chief actor, they both mounted their horses and took the road to the château.

It is unnecessary to add that the baron alone took leave of the good curé, and that Roger by no means begged the favor of bidding him adieu.

IX.

HOW AND ON WHAT TERMS THE MARRIAGE OF MADEMOISELLE DE BEUZERIE WITH THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM CAME NEAR BEING ARRANGED BY THEIR NEXT OF KIN.

This was the third time that Roger was returning to Anguilhem after having seen his plans frustrated; but this time, however, he was not returning quite without hope. Notwithstanding Roger's ignorance of the ways of the world, he realized perfectly the change wrought in his projects by the death of Monsieur de Bouzenois, even supposing that, as his father had said, the ex-captain's inheritance were subject to a lawsuit.

Upon his arrival at the château his hopes were redoubled, for the baroness, who was watching for the baron and his son at the tower-window which commanded a view of the surrounding country, descended at sight of them, and appeared at the door with a smiling countenance. Roger spurred his horse directly toward her, dismounted, and cast himself into her arms whispering, —

"Do you, too, hope, mother? Oh! don't deceive me, don't deceive me!"

"Yes, my child, yes, my dear child," returned the baroness; "yes, be tranquil; all will go well."

In fact the baroness, like her husband, had witnessed a metamorphosis. When the viscountess, who had accompanied Constance to Anguilhem, had in the morn-

ing discovered her daughter's flight, she was furiously angry. In the very midst of the explosion of maternal wrath came the letter from Maître Coquenard, announcing to the d'Anguilhems the death of Monsieur de Bouzenois. Now that letter had quieted the viscountess as by magic, and she had appeared incontinently to forget a portion of her grief in sharing the good news that her neighbors had just received. Finally, when the messenger from the curé of La Chapelle-Saint-Hippolyte had arrived at the château all out of breath, announcing that the runaways were at the parsonage, it was almost with a feeling of regret that the viscountess heard that, thanks to the scruples of the good priest, the two children were not married. However, as she was unaware that the same message had been despatched to her husband as well as to the baron, and as she wished to tell the viscount at once of the flight and of the event which made that flight almost good luck, she ordered her horse and coach, which, in order that Roger should not remark her presence, had been left at the farmer's, and she set out for Beuzerie, after having, in her adieux to the baroness, let fall a few words intimating as clearly as possible that a visit from the baron at Beuzerie would not only be well received, but that, under the circumstances, it was regarded by herself as indispensable.

The outlook, therefore, continued to be as favorable in the direction of the viscountess as it had been in the viscount's. As for Constance, the chevalier had reason to know that he could depend on her.

Hence in a general council at which assisted the Abbé Dubuquoi, whose duties were rapidly being converted into a sinecure, it was arranged that the baron should the next day pay a visit to Beuzerie and speak of the marriage or be silent, as circumstances demanded; but

the general opinion, even the abbé's, was that he would incontestably have to bring up the subject of the marriage.

The great day, so impatiently awaited by Roger, came at last. At six o'clock he was up and had awakened his father. But the baron was too punctilious an observer of the proprieties to present himself at Beuzerie before noon. Roger had therefore to curb his impatience, which he did by talking to his mother of Constance.

At nine o'clock, mounted on Christopher, the baron departed. Roger exacted a promise that he would remain at Beuzerie no longer than was strictly necessary for discussing the various conditions relating to his marriage. The baron promised to return by four o'clock in the afternoon.

At two o'clock Roger could stand it no longer. He slung his gamebag across his back, shouldered his gun, untied Castor, who, quite unlike Christopher, had remained for more than a year in a state of repose, and took the road to Beuzerie. When he had gone almost a third of the way, he caught sight of the baron who was coming back at full trot. His gait was a good omen.

A few strides and Roger was at his side.

In fact the news was good, and everything was settled, if not quite to Roger's taste, at least to his father's.

Roger's suit was tacitly approved by the viscount and the viscountess. The next day the entire d'Anguilhem family was to pay a neighborly visit to Beuzerie. The visit was to pass off like any ordinary visit, having no special significance, since the viscount, full of prudence as he was, did not wish his new plans to be suspected. Then, on the day following his visit, or on the second day after it, Roger would leave for Paris, where he would personally superintend the lawsuit, on the issue of

which depended the viscount's final consent. That plan presented the double advantage of placing matters in the hands of the one most interested in their termination, and of keeping Roger at a distance from Constance for a year at least, for in those days the shortest lawsuits were very long. Meanwhile Constance would return to the convent while she awaited her sixteenth year, and Roger his nineteenth. It was the age *de rigueur* for country marriages.

All this contained both good and ill for Roger. He would have preferred to marry first and go afterwards. It seemed to him quite as logical and far more tolerable; and it was with the greatest difficulty in the world that the baron brought him to understand that the thing was impossible, since his marriage was to depend on his gaining the lawsuit. The agreement was, however, so clear and so squarely put, that the chevalier was forced to yield. Roger had therefore about decided to lend himself to this new scheme, when, at half a league from Anguilhem, they met the baroness, who, in company with the abbé, had in turn come to meet her husband and her son.

And again the plan decided upon at the viscount's was set forth by the baron, and, to Roger's great despair, it met with general approval. The poor chevalier was thereupon constrained to surrender. It was settled therefore that they should the next day call on the Beuzeries, and, as there was no time to lose, that the chevalier should set out for Paris in three days.

Yet we must say that Roger was unjust to Providence. After having had Constance positively refused to him, after believing her dead, and wishing to turn Jesuit, he had recovered her again as faithful as ever, and, fortune and happiness in all probability coming

together, he had but to wait a longer or shorter time to become at once a rich nobleman and a happy husband. In this twofold reflection there was matter for real consolation; and Roger, weighing it in the balance of common sense, began to view the future in a rosier light than he had at the baron's first words, gradually losing sight of the departure in thinking of the return.

Then, let us admit, the word Paris has at all periods had a magic ring for provincial ears. Paris is the goal toward which all young and vivacious temperaments strive. For the libertine, Paris is pleasure; for the ambitious, Paris is fame; for the speculator, Paris is fortune. Oftentimes had the word Paris been spoken in Roger's presence, but Roger had never heeded it; for never had he supposed that such an event could arise in his life as that he should have occasion to journey to Paris. But suddenly the unlooked-for event was at hand. The word Paris went ringing through his ears to an accompaniment of the chinking of crowns, a kind of music that is always agreeable, even to the man that is least concerned. In short, that same evening, upon going to bed, Roger confessed to himself that, since he was absolutely forced to be separated from Constance for a certain lapse of time, it was better that the time should be spent in Paris rather than elsewhere.

On the next day the baron and Roger donned their best attire, while the baroness put on the most beautiful of her six gowns. Then, at nine o'clock, all three got into the cariole and set off for Beuzerie.

The visit passed off as had beforehand been planned by the baron and the viscount, that is to say, according to the rigid rules of an almost royal etiquette. There was no mention of what had taken place between the two

young people. Roger and Constance bowed as if they were for the first time being introduced to each other. The baron formally acquainted Monsieur and Madame de Beuzerie of the death of Monsieur de Bouzenois, chevalier by grace of the king and captain of one of his frigates, received the condolences of the viscount and the viscountess, and announced that, the succession having given rise to a great lawsuit, his son, the chevalier, was about to leave for Paris the next day in order to attend to it. The viscount and the viscountess then wished the chevalier complete success in his undertaking, laying great stress on the pleasure they would personally take in his prosperity. Then they in turn let it incidentally be known that their daughter, being still too young to think of any establishment, would return to her convent at Chinon, where she would remain until it was time for her to marry.

These official communications having been exchanged, the baron, the baroness, and the chevalier arose. Then, gravely bowing, they took leave of the viscount and the viscountess, entered the cariole, and went back to Anguilhem.

That evening and the following day were spent in preparations for the chevalier's departure. In the evening, the baron solemnly desired Roger to ascend to his room. Roger understood that he was about to receive the paternal instructions, and he respectfully presented himself before the baron, who received him standing; as for the baroness, she was seated, and it was apparent that she had already wept much, and that she was obliged to summon all her self-control to keep from weeping still.

The chevalier came slowly forward, and when within a few steps of his father, he bent his head.

"My son," said the baron, "you are about to enter what is to you a new and an unknown world. Above all things guard your honor. A gentleman's honor is like a woman's reputation. Once tarnished, it can never be cleared. Above all, then, I repeat, watch over your honor.

"You will form the acquaintance of young men, I will not say nobler than yourself, — any gentleman able to prove his nobility is the equal of any other gentleman, — but of young men more favored than you. In their company, you will find gambling much in vogue. Play only when you cannot do otherwise. You are neither rich enough to be able to lose, nor poor enough to desire to win. In any case, if you have the misfortune to play and lose, sell even your last shirt to pay your debt. Every debt is sacred, but a gaming debt is doubly so.

"We have concluded, the baroness and I, that one hundred louis will be sufficient for all your expenses during the year. Here, then, is the first half of that sum. The pieces are old, for they are our savings of fifteen years. Young and active as you are, you will appear at the court of law; you will bow before judges, you will seek powerful protection, and you will succeed, I hope. Fortune favors the young.

"Every week you will receive from us a detailed letter, which every week you will answer with as exact details. So that, if we gain our suit, you yourself will have been the builder of your own fortune. Then, the lawsuit won, if you marry Constance, of which there can be no doubt, and if the marriage makes your happiness, you will owe your good fortune to no one but yourself, which, in this world, is indeed something.

"You will travel with Christopher. He is a good

animal, hard to tire, well appearing, and he would be better still if you had not overridden him at times. He was shod yesterday. When passing through Saint Aignan, have his mane and tail fashionably clipped. His trappings are neat, his saddle is excellent. You will find my travelling pistols in the holsters.

"Now, my son, you have sometimes given us pain. We forgive you, your mother and I. For my part, I have caused you much in the matter of that death story. I do not know whether I was justified in causing you that suffering. I think not, for it was a lie, and, even with good intention, a lie is always a lie. I ask God's pardon for it."

"O father! father!" cried Roger, unable to restrain his tears.

"I did not say that to cause you sorrow, Roger," resumed the baron, mistaking the sentiment that had wrested this exclamation from his son. "You have a good heart and a brave one, but your head is bad. Distrust yourself, therefore, even more than others. It is the last advice of your father who loves you. And now," continued the baron, himself deeply moved, "receive our blessing."

Roger fell on his knees, and, with a gesture full of tenderness and paternal dignity, the baron extended his hands, and, with eyes lifted toward heaven, laid them for an instant on his son's head. Rising, Roger cast himself into the arms of his mother.

"Dear child," said the baroness, "go to your room, for I feel that you too have occasion for tears. For the rest, be reassured, as I shall write postscripts to your father's letters."

Roger again kissed his mother, who, without his needing to speak, had responded so quickly to the inmost

thought of his heart. Then, after kissing the hand that his father extended to him, he withdrew to his room and wept, in fact, a good part of the night.

When day came he dressed himself for his journey. The Baron d'Anguilhem had already risen and seen that everything was in readiness. Christopher was saddled and bridled and had a suitably filled portmanteau on behind. With deep emotion, the chevalier observed that the baron's eyes were almost as red as his own.

Breakfast was served, but no one touched it. Every one was weeping or gulping down his grief. The baron was sensible that the sooner an end was put to a situation so melancholy for all, the better it would be. On rising from the table, Roger approached his tutor and asked his forgiveness for all the vexation he had caused him. The poor abbé, wholly selfish in the ordinary occurrences of life, in tones of deep emotion pardoned the thousand and one little peccadilloes committed by his pupil.

Roger went forth, giving his mother his arm and his father his hand. At the doorway he found the house servants weeping bitterly, for every one at Anguilhem worshipped Roger. He kissed them all, as if they were friends, and they wept the more.

Castor yelped aloud and bounded the length of his chain. One would have said the poor animal understood that his master was leaving home for a long time. His master went to him, and Castor stood up with his paws against his breast and kissed him after his own fashion.

The baron and the baroness accompanied their son almost a quarter of a league; and then, as they must stop somewhere, the baron stopped abruptly. This time, being no longer under the solemn restraint of his

father's blessing, Roger cast himself into the baron's arms.

Then came the poor mother's turn. The baroness could not part with her child. Her poor heart was rent with sobs, and in the depths of her soul she cursed the unlucky inheritance that was tearing away her child. The abbé was gazing after them from the window of the tower and waving his handkerchief.

At last the baron took his son by the hand, and, conducting him to his horse, he said, —

"Let us part bravely, my son. Remember that you are eighteen years old, and that, consequently, you are a man."

Roger mounted Christopher, who, with drooping head and tail, seemed to partake of the general depression; but the mother once more ran toward her son with outstretched hands, which he covered with kisses. At last the baron tore his wife away from those endless embraces, and, with all the fortitude he could muster, said to his son, —

"Spur on, monsieur, I command you."

Roger obeyed and was off. At a hundred paces, however, he looked back to see his mother once more. Then, when he saw her lying so helpless and weeping in the baron's arms, he went back, again kissed her, again pressed his father's hand, again galloped away, and five minutes later he had disappeared behind a clump of trees.

Then in his poor heart Roger felt that there remained still other adieux to be said. He would not, he could not, go away without seeing Constance once more. The day on which he was to leave had been mentioned before Constance, and he hoped she had understood that, although it would take him slightly out of his way, he

would pass Beuzerie. He therefore urged Christopher on, and soon, rising beyond the warren, he saw the weather-vanes of the château.

Roger continued to advance, but all the while he kept glancing right and left with a remnant of timidity in the depths of his heart due to the former interdiction of the viscount and the viscountess. At a turn of the road, through the trees, he caught a glimpse of a white dress. He spurred on. It was Constance, who, sitting on the moss with a book in her hand, was pretending to read.

In an instant Roger was beside her, and, springing down from Christopher, he dropped upon his knees.

"Ah! here you are, Roger!" cried the young girl, "I expected you."

"And I, Constance," said Roger, "was sure of finding you."

"You are going then?"

"I must go. You know our happiness is at stake."

"Yes, Roger, yes," said the young girl; "my mother has told me all. Our marriage is set for your return. You are to be rich, it seems. How fortunate I am! I shall owe you everything."

"Oh! you are an angel, Constance," cried Roger. "I too can hardly believe in my future happiness, and I am still afraid lest you escape me."

"It is you, rather, whom I may never see again, you who are going to Paris, and who will forget me in that great city."

"I forget you, Constance? Oh! never, never. If I have no more to fear on your part than you have to fear on mine, I shall indeed be happy."

"And what have you to fear about me?"

"What have I to fear, Constance? I am afraid of losing my lawsuit, and that the viscount will then

withhold his consent and marry you to the Marquis de Croisey."

"I will never marry any one but you, Roger," replied Constance; "and if I am not to be yours I shall be no one's."

"Swear, then, that you will marry only when I myself release you from your oath."

"I swear it."

"That you will believe nothing that is said to you about me unless you have it from my own mouth or see it written by my own hand."

"I swear it," repeated Constance.

"And I," said Roger, "swear in turn — "

But Roger had not time to finish. At that instant a bullet whizzed past, barely ten feet distant from the young people, and the viscount was heard calling to his dogs.

"My father!" cried Constance in terror; "oh, go! go!"

Roger pressed his lips to those of the pale and trembling girl, murmured the word *adieu*, and springing upon Christopher, was off at full speed. After riding a short distance he turned his head. Constance had disappeared.

It then occurred to him that Constance was the only one bound, and that in exchange for the double oath made by her, he had not had time to promise her anything. However, as Roger was a man with a conscience, under his breath he swore to himself the oath that he ought to have sworn aloud.

Poor Roger! poor Constance!

Perhaps, thanks to this imprudent exclamation that has just escaped us, our readers count upon being able to guess beforehand what sad incidents threaten the

future loves of our two young people; but, at the risk of wounding their self-esteem with respect to the penetration of which they believed themselves possessed, we assure them that, whatever their suppositions, they can bear no relation to the strange events which remain for us to tell.

X.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM MADE HIS ENTRY INTO SOCIETY.

It took eleven days for the chevalier's journey from Anguilhem to Paris. While passing through Saint Aignan he had, in accordance with his father's suggestion, had Christopher groomed and rejuvenated by the first veterinary of the place. At Orléans he had purchased a great coat and renewed the lace of his hat. At Versailles he had longed to stop and visit the court, but on comparing his own state with that of the seigneurs whom he met, he had been abashed by the contrast, and had continued his way, and had thus reached Paris with no stops other than for eating, sleeping, and resting Christopher, all which, as we have said, did not prevent his consuming eleven days on the road.

The chevalier arrived at Paris by way of Chaillot. This entrance to the capital was far from being at that time what it is to-day, hence Roger was not too greatly impressed by what he saw, and he maintained, with regard to the great city, a respectable degree of dignity. Yet he drew rein to admire the stately prison which arose below the convent of the Filles-Sainte-Marie, and which he at first took for a palace; then he followed the Quai de la Savonnerie and entered the Cours-la-Reine. Here, it must be admitted, his astonishment increased. The Louvre was in front of him. The Invalides, with its resplendent dome, was at his right. Then, as it was a fine summer day, a throng of carriages

filled with the handsomest seigneurs and the most elegant dames of the time coursed the thoroughfare at his left. Soon he found himself in the middle of a marble-yard, a vast, roofless atelier where Louis XIV. had the statues hewn with which he made France bristle, and which, extending along the Rue de la Bonne-Morue, covered the very spot to-day occupied by the Place de la Concorde. God rest the souls of those who have substituted stone and iron for the marble and bronze with which it was filled at that epoch!

On arriving at this marble-yard, which obstructed his course, the chevalier was embarrassed to know whether he should turn to the right or the left. He questioned a workman.

"Monsieur," answered the latter, "although your horse looks like a good strong animal, he seems thoroughly tired out. Don't take the quay, then, for the pavement is very bad. Go by the Porte Saint-Honoré, Leave at your left the Filles de la Conception and the Hôtel de Luxembourg; then you will come to the Place Louis-le-Grand; you will readily recognize it. It is a large square with a statue of the king on horseback. It is a good quarter in which to choose a hotel."

The chevalier followed the route and the advice. He found the Place Louis-le-Grand at the point indicated; but, not daring to venture upon staying in so fine a quarter, he kept on his course a little distance beyond, and, finding a hotel of sufficiently modest appearance to seem in keeping with the state of his fortunes, he halted. Its sign was "The Golden Harrow."

With an air quite assured for a provincial, the chevalier cleared the grand entrance, and, being fatigued, he abandoned Christopher to the care of a groom, ascended to a small room on the fifth floor, which was assigned to

him from his appearance, went to bed, went to sleep, and awoke only on the morrow.

The morrow come, his first thought was to go and present to a certain Marquis de Cretté a very strong letter of introduction which his father had received from Monsieur d'Orquinon of a neighboring country-seat. But, as he stood at the window, the chevalier remarked so great a difference between his own toilet and those of the people who passed on horseback and in carriages that he blushed for his own costume, notwithstanding that he had always thought it very gallant in the country. He therefore learned where he could find a dealer in second-hand clothing, whither he immediately repaired, and where he bought a coat that was almost new, a vest still presentable, a pair of clocked stockings, and a sword. Thus transformed, the chevalier, thanks to his excellent personal appearance, was presentable even in Paris, notwithstanding that his sky-blue coat bore a knot of apple-green ribbon on the shoulder, a union of colors that might seem somewhat hazardous, but which was undoubtedly an amorous fancy of its former proprietor. When he was arrayed in his new costume the chevalier thought he had better study the effect of his brisk attire upon less noble material than the marquis and the society that our débutant must meet at his house, and in order to experiment *in animâ vili*, Roger repaired to the house of Maître Coquenard, his father's attorney, Rue du Mouton, near the Place de Grève.

Roger, as we have said, was a handsome fellow, and although from the province, his bearing was that of a gentleman. The country tan would without doubt be recognized upon his rounded face and brawny hands; but he had a well-shaped leg, and from time to time his eye sparkled through his timidity. Yet his sword in-

convenienced him sorely by beating the calves of his legs, for at Anguilhem he had not been in the habit of wearing a sword. The perpetual slapping caused him annoyance. Nor did he know, either, that he should require clowns to give way while he himself should yield the pavement to his superiors. Hence he turned out for a chair-porter, and jostled a man of quality; but his look of surprise saved him from the displeasure of the latter, while his athletic figure spared him the raillery of the former. In fact, as we have said, the chevalier stood five feet and seven or eight inches in height, and was of conformable build, a size which, in every land on earth, always inspires a degree of respect.

Maître Coquenard received Roger very graciously. And in turn Roger, a gentleman never standing on ceremony, accepted the invitation extended him to share a stewed hare of most delicious aspect, and a hot pâté of most savory odor. They took places at the table without further ceremony, and both began to feast in excellent style, and then they entered upon business matters. In order to deaden as much as possible the force of the blow that he was about to deal him, Maître Coquenard employed many delicate circumlocutions to inform Roger that the suit at law for the succession, which had brought him to Paris, was of all things the most difficult and the least certain; that, in accepting the right to inherit, the Baron d'Anguilhem was pledged by the very act of that acceptance in the sum of twenty thousand livres charged to the account of the dead man's debts.

Roger was appalled at this preliminary statement.

But this was not all. Maître Coquenard further explained that the initial expenses of their application during the last eight days already amounted to nine hundred livres.

This time Roger turned pale, and lost his appetite, for under all this, aside from the money lost, lay the contingency of his marrying or not marrying Constance; and we must say to the credit of our hero that, although twelve days had passed since he had left Mademoiselle de Beuzerie, and he had since then seen a goodly stretch of country, and on the day before had gained his first taste of the capital, the maiden's image was as present to his memory as at the moment of his leavetaking.

As for the effect produced on the chevalier's appetite, let us add that the dinner was approaching an end when he learned this news.

Provided with this lugubrious intelligence, Roger reentered The Golden Harrow with a step much less assured than that with which he had gone forth.

To fulfil the promise made to his father, the chevalier began a letter to him in which he announced his fortunate arrival in Paris, his interview with Monsieur Coquenard, and the unpleasant news that he had gathered at the worthy solicitor's. He terminated his letter by saying that he was at that moment setting out to make use of Monsieur d'Orquinon's letter to the Marquis de Cretté.

In fact, his letter written and confided to the post, the chevalier cast a more critical glance at his toilet, changed his cravat, put on his cuffs, and set off, not without a beating heart, in the direction of the residence of the Marquis de Cretté, situated in the Faubourg Saint Germain, Rue du Four, about two hundred yards from the Hôtel de Montmorency.

The especial cause of the chevalier's quickened pulse was his expectation of meeting a grave old man, severe and formal, after the pattern of Monsieur de Beuzerie, a style that was naturally antipathetic. Then, behind

this grave old man, severe and formal, he could see a crotchety dowager with dull eyes and a shrill voice, and, attending this amiable old couple, a dozen insolent lackeys. There was but one consolation for the chevalier in all this, — that old men are somewhat provincial even in Paris.

But, on arriving at the hôtel, quite contrary to what he had expected, he discovered half a dozen blooded horses, caparisoned in the very latest fashion, held by five or six valets in different liveries, but all of them so brilliant and gay that one could not but suppose that both animals and men belonged to young noblemen thoroughly versed in the fashions of the day; and all this, it must be said, disconcerted Roger far more than the picture of an antique household which he had anticipated finding.

The porter stood erect at the entrance, a three-cornered hat upon his head, a broad baldric across his shoulder, and a cane in his hand, warning off with equally aristocratic gesture both dogs and louts that loitered with gaping jaws and mouths before the gate of the hôtel; but when he saw Roger he carried his hand to his hat with the instinct that tells a lackey that he has to do with a gentleman, and inquired in what way he could serve him. Roger replied that he wished to speak with Monsieur le Marquis de Cretté; whereupon the porter spoke to one of the valets who were holding the horses. The latter made a sign to a tall, ungainly fellow, whose seams were all covered with galloon, who introduced the chevalier into an elegant salon on the ground-floor looking into the court on one side and into the garden on the other.

An instant later six young gentlemen, all of distinguished appearance, jaunty and gay, descended the grand

staircase, leaping four steps at a time. One of them turned aside toward the salon; the five others scattered about the court, each running to the horse that was being held for him.

"Who asked for me?" cried, while still at a distance, the gentleman who had directed his course toward the salon.

"Monsieur le Chevalier d'Anguilhem," answered the lackey.

"The Chevalier d'Anguilhem," repeated the young man, as if searching his memory, "I do not know him."

"That is true, monsieur," responded Roger, opening the door himself; "and I beg a thousand pardons for having so ill chosen my time as to arrive just as you are ready to go out; but I pray you to fix yourself a time at which I may have the honor to return."

This was said with a little awkwardness, but also with an amount of dignity that impressed the Marquis de Cretté.

"By no means, monsieur," responded the marquis, "I am quite at your service, now as always. Will you, therefore, kindly tell me to what I owe the honor of your visit?"

These words were accompanied by a bow of exquisite politeness.

"Monsieur le Marquis," answered the chevalier, "I present myself through the kindness of Monsieur d'Orquinon, your friend, I believe, and I wish to deliver a letter from him."

"I have not the honor of knowing Monsieur d'Orquinon personally," returned the marquis; "but he was, I remember, one of my poor father's most intimate friends, of whom I have heard him speak many a time."

"Ah!" thought Roger to himself, "the marquis loves his father. He will not ridicule me very much."

Then, while the marquis broke the seal and read his letter, Roger examined him in turn.

He was a handsome, elegant youth of from twenty-two to twenty-four years of age, rather slight, but of perfect figure, and whose attire might have served as a model of elegance, as his speech, his gestures, his bearing would have served as a model of good manners; a survival, indeed, of the old nobility with an anticipatory graft of the new aristocracy, so soon to bloom in the reign of the regent.

When he had read the letter, he raised his eyes to the chevalier.

"Alas, monsieur," he said, "this letter was addressed to the Marquis de Cretté, my father, whom we have had the misfortune to lose during this last year; but I comprehend that you had not learned of it in the country."

Roger flushed. The phrase, "in the country," brought the blood to his face.

"And yet, monsieur, I think we sent a letter to Orquinon; but this letter which you have done me the honor to bring proves that the death of the Marquis de Cretté has not been heard of down there."

Roger turned redder still than he had on the first occasion. "Down there" sounded to him like the antipodes.

"No matter," continued the marquis, doubtless perceiving the young man's embarrassment, "the son takes the father's place among the friends of our family, and as you have kindly come to see us, you are welcome. Pray count upon me, then, without the least hesitation."

"Monsieur le Marquis, you really overwhelm me. I am only a poor provincial, very ridiculous, I feel, and very tiresome, perhaps, for I have never been outside of

Anguilhem; but, I assure you, I know how to be grateful for your gracious reception."

"But now you overwhelm me in turn, monsieur," responded the marquis as he saluted Roger with a cordiality that penetrated his heart.

Then, turning to his friends who were chatting on the steps, he called, —

"Come, messieurs, if you please, and let me present to you Monsieur le Chevalier d'Anguilhem, who is introduced to me by one of my father's most faithful friends."

The young people drew near, and at their approach Roger saluted them with a bow that was not lacking in dignity.

"We are just starting out for Saint Germain, chevalier," said the marquis; "are you at leisure to-day? If so, and if our society is not too disagreeable to you, we shall be delighted to have the honor of yours."

"But, messieurs, you seem to be setting off on horseback," observed Roger.

"Yes, I understand," returned the marquis, "and you came by coach or chaise, and so you have no mount."

"I have my own horse at the hotel," Roger said with a smile; "but, I must confess, in all humility, that he would cut too sorry a figure beside yours for me to risk my poor Christopher in their company."

"What! he is outspoken at his own expense," thought the marquis; "why, the lad is not so provincial as I supposed. Well," he resumed aloud, "we can manage that. I have a horse in the stable, one that we rejected because he is pretty difficult to manage. You shall take my horse and I will mount Marlborough. Besides, as you know, messieurs," added the marquis, laughing, "he owes me revenge. Marlborough has

treated me as his namesake was in the habit of treating Monsieur de Villars. He threw me the other day, flat on my back, as our friend Guérinière says."

"But," timidly remonstrated Roger, "do not inconvenience yourself for me, Monsieur le Marquis."

The marquis mistook his meaning, and, approaching Roger, he asked in a low tone, —

"You ride, do you not, monsieur?"

"A little, Monsieur le Marquis; but you did not understand me. I have the honor to suggest that you mount your usual horse, and permit me, if you will, to ride Marlborough."

"Ah! ah!" ejaculated the marquis, as he gazed in astonishment at Roger.

"Why not?" said Roger; "for my own part, I am a countryman, messieurs. I have ridden a great deal, so much that I do not know whether it is because I understand horses or they understand me, but my seat is very secure. Therefore, have no concern about me, and if my society is not less welcome than it was a moment ago, and you still wish me for a comrade, why, have Marlborough saddled."

"Faith, monsieur, I will not deprive you of the honor. Boisjoli," cried the marquis to one of his men, "saddle Marlborough!"

The groom turned toward the stables, thrusting out his tongue with a wink at his fellows, as if plainly saying, —

"Good! now we shall have some fun."

"But," said the marquis, "you are in shoes and silk hose. You must at least have boots and spurs, certainly."

"I can go to my hotel and get them," replied Roger.

"Where are you staying?"

"Rue Saint Honoré."

"No, it is too far. Rameau-d'or," cried the marquis, addressing another servant, "go to my bootmaker's and have him bring five or six pairs of riding-boots; quickly!"

The valet left.

"Now, my dear chevalier," said the marquis, "you shall know at least where I am taking you. We are having a bachelors' party at Saint Germain's. You see that you have come very opportunely, for I presume that you are not averse, on coming to Paris, to learning how they behave here. Then, your education perfected in this respect, you will go away carrying off your millions, — for you should know, messieurs," continued the marquis, turning to his comrades, "that Monsieur d'Anguilhem comes to Paris, I am informed, to enter into a poor little inheritance of fifteen hundred thousand livres."

"*Peste!*" exclaimed the young men in chorus; "accept our sincere congratulations."

"Take my advice, Monsieur le Chevalier," said one young man with the quick familiarity that obtains among people of rank, "cut that down a figure or two before taking it away, and let us show you how to set about it."

"Ah! *pardieu!* chevalier," cried the Marquis de Cretté; "you may trust that to d'Herbigny; he is past-master in that sort of undertaking. He has already eaten up two uncles and an aunt."

"Come," said another, "who is the worthy defunct that has given up a million and a half?"

"My cousin, Monsieur le Vicomte de Bouzenois," said Roger.

"In that case, my dear chevalier, give me your hand.

We must be of kin to each other, by the left hand. I have succeeded to his last mistress."

"Is your portion worth as much as mine?" asked Roger, shaking his hand.

"Come, come, not so bad!" exclaimed the Marquis de Cretté; "what do you say, Tréville?"

"I say that Monsieur le Chevalier d'Anguilhem will give the lie to the saying, 'stupid as a millionaire.' He will be rich and witty: *gaudeant bene nati.*"

"Amen," said Cretté. "Chevalier, here come your boots."

Roger accompanied the bootmaker to a small dressing-room.

"Well, messieurs," said the marquis, looking after him as he disappeared, "agree with me that this lad is not at all bad for a provincial. He will bore us much less than we might have expected in the beginning."

Five minutes later Roger emerged from the dressing-room, booted and spurred in a way to have made any courser other than Marlborough tremble. On gaining the steps a groom handed him a riding-whip.

The young gentlemen mounted their horses and Boisjoli led up Marlborough.

He was an admirable dark-bay, with waving mane, fiery nostrils, bloodshot eyes, and slender legs, whose veins stood out and crossed like network. Roger looked him over like a connoisseur, and understood that he had a worthy adversary; nor did he neglect any necessary precaution. He separated and gathered up the reins, settled himself in the stirrups, and then, when he found himself firm in the saddle, he made a sign to Boisjoli to let him go.

It was the moment for which Marlborough was waiting. Scarcely was he free before he began to jump,

to rear, to shy, to execute, in short, all the manœuvres by whose aid he was accustomed to unseat his riders; but this time he had met his master. Roger permitted him for a time to perform all his capricious antics, and contented himself with so accommodating his own movements to them, that horse and rider seemed but one. Then, when he thought the time had come for putting an end to all those whims, he began to make his knees felt so effectually that Marlborough understood that his affairs had reached a crisis. Thereupon, he redoubled his efforts; but this time both whip and spur played their part in such fashion that the horse began to whinny with pain and toss flakes of foam. At last, after ten minutes of desperate struggle, Marlborough recognized that he was vanquished. Roger then amused himself by making him execute circles, as in a training school. Then he put him through a course of paces, of curvettings, and of all, in short, that the famous La Guérinière, the Franconi of the day, was in the habit of teaching to the best broken horses.

Our young gentlemen had at first watched the proceedings with the greatest curiosity, but later with the greatest pleasure. The Marquis de Cretté, especially, was very proud of Roger's triumph; and, when Master Marlborough was entirely quieted, he advanced to congratulate the chevalier, upon which the eulogies of the other young people mingled in chorus.

They started for Saint Germain. All along the way the entire conversation was of the dulness into which the rigorous strictness of Madame de Maintenon and the austerities of Louis XIV. had plunged France. These madcaps invoked all the devils to fly away with the widow Scarron, whom they spoke of only as "the old woman."

There was, indeed, already a party that ridiculed Père Lachaise and his august penitents, — a party that was beginning to rally around the Duc d'Orléans and making opposition to the old order of things; but the faction was very weak as yet, and as it was in great disfavor at Versailles, it was rather hazardous to avow openly that one belonged to it.

Roger, having been raised among the provincial nobility who made, as we have said, a systematic opposition, felt himself quite at home, and took his part quite acceptably in the refrain of maledictions with which they reviled the favorite. He even enriched the subject with ditties of Touraine about Père Lachaise and the directress of Saint Cyr, composed by some wits near Loches. Moreover, he thought he was being very audacious, and was only gay.

But, on the whole, what Roger particularly admired was the way in which these gentlemen trifled with their frills and fingered their ruffles, the exceeding superiority of the cut of their garments, the marvellous choice of stuffs whose colors harmonized so pleasantly, each with another, that this very harmony filled him with dread. He did not believe that he could ever manage so to pinch his waist and yet wear his clothes with such ease. In spite of this naïve admiration, which Roger did not even endeavor to conceal, not a single scoff was aimed at him, for which he was so grateful that he became humble, and sought every opportunity for self-abasement, but he could hardly open his mouth in depreciation of his own alarming costume and his provincial manners before some one of the young people would gently interrupt him.

Arrived at Saint Germain, they ordered dinner, but as an hour at least must pass before the dinner could

be ready, Monsieur de Cretté proposed a game of cards.

Roger trembled on hearing that proposition.

"Alas!" thought he, "these people play as high as three or four pistoles." Poor Roger!

He cast a glance of misgiving at his host, who quickly understood him.

"Messieurs," said the marquis, "perhaps the Chevalier d'Anguilhem does not know our game very well. Let us limit the stakes to twenty louis to give him time to learn it without ruining himself."

At this chivalrous announcement a cold sweat bathed Roger's face.

"Half of all I possess," he said to himself. "I am a lost man!"

Then, in a single second he understood all the vanities of existence. Anguilhem, La Guérite, La Pintade, the economies of a half century heaped in the paternal strong-box, all could be squandered in an hour at cards, and with people who played a small game besides. It was not calculated, it will be agreed, to increase his sense of importance.

Monsieur de Cretté divined that Roger was burning with a desire to speak with him in private. He therefore rose when they began to prepare the table for a game, and sauntered indifferently into the next room. Roger followed him.

"My faith, marquis," said Roger with the frankness that had won the liking of his comrades from the beginning, "I do not wish to sail under false colors among honest men. My father is not rich. He has given me a little money for my journey, and I am afraid—"

"Of losing?"

"No, but of losing too much."

"Nonsense! get rid of that notion, then. One of the qualifications of a gentleman is to be a good player."

"Yes; but to be a good player a man ought not to lose more than he possesses."

"Why not?"

"What, of money?"

"Money? A man always has money, if not in his own pockets, at least in his friends'."

"Excuse me, marquis, but I do not like to borrow."

"You are a child, chevalier. Nobody borrows; everybody plays *en l'air;* that is the way we do. How much do you think we have among us all? A hundred louis, perhaps; but at the bottom of the purse is the word, chevalier, and a gentleman's word is as good as a gold mine. And besides, when a man is playing among honorable men like us, the good luck balances the bad. We play all the year around among ourselves. We win and we lose prodigious sums, and on the thirty-first day of December the unluckiest of us is not more than a hundred pistoles behind. Play, then, fearlessly, lose cheerfully, or I forewarn you that I shall look black."

"I shall do everything in my power to keep in your good graces, marquis," returned Roger, smiling.

"Then come back without farther delay. I hear the gold jingling."

The marquis and Roger re-entered the room; the table was prepared; the game was ready. D'Anguilhem lost his twenty louis in three rounds.

During that one half hour all that terror holds of poignant anguish gripped the chevalier's heart. Yet, although his temples twitched a little, his smile did not fade for an instant. The marquis challenged him to stake anew.

The chevalier drew twenty louis more from his pocket.

At the end of five rounds the chevalier had won back his twenty louis and forty others. Then he began to play cautiously.

"This excellent d'Anguilhem is a veritable monopolist," remarked the Marquis de Cretté as he shoved over to the chevalier some fifteen louis which were his due, and which the chevalier had just won from him with a pair-royal of knaves. "He comes to Paris to get fifteen hundred thousand livres, and wishes to carry off our money besides."

Roger took the hint, thanked his friend by a frank smile, and began to play as freely as when he was losing.

But Roger was in luck. At the end of ten minutes he had three hundred louis stacked in front of him.

It must be said that if the chevalier's terror had been profound, his joy was delirious.

Dinner was announced. D'Anguilhem inwardly thanked heaven for giving him this chance to achieve what is technically called a Charlemagne. Cretté saw the expression of satisfaction that passed over his countenance, slight as it was.

"Chevalier," said the marquis, "you would like us to think you very elated over your winnings, and that is modesty on your part; but I know you. I will wager that you are going to risk your winnings of three hundred louis against d'Herbigny, who has lost four hundred, I think, on the first twenty-one that comes to hand."

As he spoke he gave Roger a significant look.

"You are right, marquis; but as a twenty-one, however, does not occur in every coup, I propose to Monsieur d'Herbigny that we play three hundred louis, one against the other, on the first round and without looking at our cards. We take what we get."

"Agreed!" exclaimed d'Herbigny.

The cards were dealt. No one entered upon the game. The two laid down their cards. Roger had twenty-nine and d'Herbigny thirty.

Roger reddened slightly, but that was all.

"Here are your three hundred louis, vicomte," he said with a laugh.

"You are a very fine player, Monsieur d'Anguilhem," responded d'Herbigny with a bow.

"Accept my compliments, chevalier," said the Comte de Chastellux. "You play like a true gentleman."

"And mine," added the Baron de Tréville.

"And ours," continued the others.

Cretté took his hand, and as he pressed it he murmured in his ear, —

"Well done! A man is known by the way he plays and fights. Keep on as you have begun to-day, and in three months you will be an accomplished cavalier."

"Compliments enough," thought Roger as he rose. "I appear to have done something very fine." But in going from the gaming-table to the dinner-table he heaved a great sigh that nearly strangled him.

The dinner was of the gayest. The Marquis de Cretté and his set piqued themselves on their drinking; but they were, in this respect, mere babes beside their provincial convive. Roger complained in all seriousness that the glasses were small and the wine weak.

"Zounds!" exclaimed d'Herbigny; "you play as well as you ride, and you drink as well as you play. Everything seems to be well done at Anguilhem."

Roger was amazed at finding himself not only equal but even superior in some things to these marvels of elegance.

During the entire dinner the talk was of hunting and

duels and conquests. On the first and last heads the chevalier could relate a sufficient number of feats, although his amours were not of the same sort as those of his new friends. But on the second subject he could boast neither prowess nor triumph. Never had he been engaged in even the smallest duel. Never had he seen one. It was humiliating, and he figured as a rather sulky listener.

The dessert was reached when a second group arrived. Those who comprised it were as noisy on their arrival as were the Marquis de Cretté and his convives at the end of their dinner.

" So we are to have the Messieurs de Kollinski," said the Marquis de Cretté, with an air of vexation that did not escape Roger.

Roger leaned from the window and saw four gentlemen, two of whom, superbly attired in foreign costumes, strutted across the threshold with great boisterousness.

They were two Hungarian gentlemen whose array was so sumptuous as to amount to extravagance. Their luxury was insulting even in that epoch of luxury.

Instantly a hush fell upon the first comers, as if they feared to encourage the familiarity of these last arrivals.

Roger leaned toward the marquis and inquired, —

" Who are the Messieurs de Kollinski ? "

" Two honorable Hungarian noblemen who live here after the manner of their country," responded the marquis, " beating landlords, maltreating lackeys, barring the way of passers-by, — all which would be delightful if duelling were not prohibited and so stringently punished. They are brave for that matter. No fault is to be found with them in that respect."

Roger profited by the information.

The Messieurs de Kollinski then entered the great

hall of the inn, and they all courteously saluted one another. But the first compliments were hardly exchanged before the Marquis de Cretté arose, an example that was imitated by the gentlemen of his party, paid the reckoning, and departed, followed by Roger and his other companions.

From the foot of the staircase Roger heard the Messieurs de Kollinski burst into a shout of laughter, and the words "apple-green ribbons" struck his ear several times. Now Roger wore, as we have said, a knot of apple-green ribbons on his shoulder. It was an ornament in very bad taste, especially on a sky-blue coat. Roger was not aware of it in the morning, but he had discerned it by evening. He was, therefore, enraged at the laughers, and he began to detest them from the bottom of his heart. Roger felt that in their eyes he was ridiculous.

Monsieur de Cretté, for his part, had not lost a word of their raillery, for, as he mounted his horse, he exclaimed, —

"*Mon Dieu!* but these Messieurs de Kollinski are provokingly insolent!"

Roger divined that the jest of the Hungarians had been understood by his comrades. He suffered cruelly, but, having said nothing at the moment, he was constrained to swallow his wrath.

Again in Paris, Roger affectionately thanked the marquis for his many kind favors, asked each gentleman present for permission to call on him, and accepted an invitation to make one of a tennis-party on the morrow.

"Remove your apple-green knot," the marquis said to him in an undertone as they separated, "and put on one of poppy-color. It is the fashionable shade."

Roger would have preferred a dagger-thrust to this delicate attention from his new friend.

"Decidedly," thought he, "I was insulted, and I did not demand satisfaction for the insult. Am I, then, a man of no spirit?"

XI.

HOW THE CHEVALIER PROFITED BY THE FENCING LESSONS GIVEN HIM BY THE BARON D'ANGUILHEM, HIS FATHER.

During the whole night, this idea kept Roger awake. He looked at the matter from a hundred standpoints; he thought of a thousand arguments in his own favor; but the sum total remained that he had been jeered at, and he had permitted it. The memory of it spoiled all that day before, so beautiful still to him. This thought, combined with the information given him by Maître Coquenard concerning the state of the lawsuit, was not calculated to conduce to a good night's rest; and so Roger, after having slept an hour or two, awoke in a very bad humor.

However, as he had on the previous day learned the value of a good coat, before taking his chocolate he sent for a tailor and ordered him to have ready, by ten o'clock in the morning, a complete costume made in the best taste that he could command. At ten o'clock the tailor returned to Roger's apartment with a coat of chatoyant taffeta, the cuffs embroidered in silver, a vest of violet gray silk, also embroidered in silver, and knee-breeches like the coat; the rest of the toilet was completed by a neck-scarf of Mechlin lace, embroidered clocked-hose and new buckles; a sword, finer than the one he wore the day before, and having a perfect edge, cocked up in cavalier fashion the left skirt of his coat.

He then frankly confided to the tailor his misgivings as to the manner of creditably carrying off all those beautiful things. The latter, who was an artist, gave him invaluable advice. Roger wished to put it into practice on the instant; he walked away, he turned, he came back before his instructor, who in the end declared himself perfectly satisfied with the way the chevalier caressed his chin and thrust his hat under his left arm; these were the chief things. Roger paid the tailor and dismissed him, already somewhat diverted from the disagreeable thoughts that had engaged his mind during all the night. He set out, then, with a light step for the Rue de Vaugirard where the tennis-court was situated.

Only a single thing was lacking to the perfect gratification of his self-esteem, — to be seen, thus dressed, by Constance; and his regret was the keener as he evidently produced a great sensation upon all whom he encountered, a sensation demonstrated by their turning about and following him with the eye. In fact, no one could understand where this handsome youth with such a self-satisfied air could be going, at ten o'clock in the morning, arrayed as if for a wedding.

Roger arrived first at the rendezvous; the markers executed profound obeisances, which seemed to him to augur well. It was the first time Roger had seen a tennis-court; he had expected to find himself in a Louvre, — he was in a barn, or little better.

So powerful already was caprice in the capital of the civilized world that the fact did not prevent this tennis-court being the most popular one in Paris.

Roger took advantage of the opportunity which he owed to his great punctuality, to gain from the markers some theoretical instruction concerning the course of the game, and some practical lessons as well. As he was

possessed of a quick intelligence, he then and there mastered the order of the play and as he had an accurate eye and a strong wrist, he drove a straight enough ball for a beginner.

In the meantime, Roger's new friends arrived. The chevalier's stupefaction was great; they were in morning breeches and dressing-gowns. Alas! to become a Parisian, the poor chevalier still had much to learn.

The Marquis de Cretté observed his surprise.

"We live in the quarter," said he, "hence we come in like neighbors."

"I," said Roger, "have some visits to make on leaving you, and I dressed beforehand."

"You would have done better to have come in négligé," returned the marquis; "you will find that you must go to your hotel from here; this costume will hinder you greatly."

"I did not expect to play," said Roger, biting his lips. "I do not know the game, and —"

"Oh," returned the marquis, "we will knock about the balls a little to put us in breath and give you an inkling of the thing, then we will play a regular game."

At that moment, a noise of ill-omen echoed in the antechamber. Several voices were heard, and among them Roger thought he recognized the voice that had ridiculed the apple-green ribbons on the previous afternoon: he felt a presentiment.

In fact, almost immediately, the Messieurs de Kollinski entered with their two companions of the day before; a cold perspiration gathered upon Roger's forehead.

"Let us make haste and take our places," said the marquis, "or we shall have a dispute with these bullies about who shall play the game."

The marquis removed his dressing-gown, his friends

did the same; Roger, for his part, despoiled himself of coat, vest, and sword.

The game began.

Roger commenced by perpetrating a few of the blunders inseparable from apprenticeship in a game so difficult, and not without shouts of laughter from the spectators. But his play improved, little by little. As a rule, all branches of physical culture are related. Apt in matters requiring skill and address, Roger made visible progress. On the other hand, the strength of his wrist aroused the admiration of his new friends; his balls whistled like cannon-shot, and a man certainly needed courage to be a third against him.

The young gentlemen were greatly amused to see the display of most unlooked-for expedients on the part of that powerful creature. Sometimes, in order to take a ball far above his head, Roger took such a leap into the air that one would have said a spring-board was under his feet; sometimes, to make a hit, he would shoot forward or dart backward with a strength of limb and a calculation of distance that were amazing in a beginner; nor did his friends withhold their eulogies. Roger was exultant.

The onlookers seemed less entertained. The Messieurs de Kollinski had come to play, and they discovered that the game of the Marquis de Cretté lasted rather too long to suit their convenience. For that reason, by way of passing the time, and while his brother sneered with his usual impertinence, Monsieur de Kollinski the elder placed himself where he could throw the balls into the pockets (*blouses*).

As the transaction took place on the Marquis de Cretté's side, it was to him that it seemed particularly disagreeable.

Meanwhile, the Marquis de Cretté became more and

more annoyed, and paid so much less attention to his play that with his increased annoyance he began to lose.

The Marquis de Cretté was a good-natured player when he lost by his own fault or by that of people whom he liked; but he was quick-tempered when he lost through others, if the others were people whom he disliked. And so, another ball being pocketed by Monsieur de Kollinski, the Marquis de Cretté lost his temper.

"*Parbleu!* monsieur," turning toward the meddler, "you pocket my balls and cause me to lose. That probably amuses you, but for my part, I fail to find it amusing."

"Very well, marquis; then I will pocket monsieur's," said the Hungarian as he passed to Roger's side.

Roger cast a questioning glance at the marquis, to which the marquis responded by a significant look.

"You may, if monsieur permits it," said the Marquis de Cretté.

"Ah! but I shall not permit it," said Roger, with an indescribable beating of the heart, as he took a few steps toward Monsieur de Kollinski.

"Look!" exclaimed the Hungarian, "here is the man of the apple-green knot. Why are you not wearing your apple-green ribbon, friend?"

Roger felt the blood mount to his temples, and yet he stood as if nailed to the spot.

He tried to reply to Monsieur de Kollinski, but his tongue was paralyzed.

"It is true that monsieur has no longer his apple-green knot," spoke up the Marquis de Cretté, "but he has a new sword."

The words were as the spark that touches off the keg of powder.

Roger approached close to Monsieur de Kollinski, and bowing gravely, he added, —

"Yes, monsieur, a new sword with which I shall have the honor to run you through the body, if that will be agreeable to you."

All present burst into a loud laugh on hearing Roger's unique challenge. Monsieur de Kollinski was about to reply in his usual noisy manner, but the Vicomte d'Herbigny had also approached him; placing a finger on his lips, he said, —

"Not in public, messieurs, I beg; we shall meet again."

The Hungarians saluted, turned, and went to the foot of the hall, where they began to laugh maliciously together.

"Why, what is the matter, chevalier?" said the marquis in a low tone to Roger, who, after the rush of blood to his face, had turned very pale; "one would say that you were ill!"

"No, monsieur; but I am somewhat disturbed."

"Is your disturbance of such a nature as to keep you from fighting if we need a fourth?"

"Keep me from fighting, — me?" returned Roger, bearing in mind his father's instructions. "I will fight ten times, if necessary, and against ten men, if you think proper; but there is something going on inside of me that is stronger than I am, and I tremble. It is rage, I think."

The marquis smiled at the simplicity with which Roger described his sensations.

"Do you fence?" he asked.

"Oh yes, a little."

"Who is your master?"

"My father taught me."

"*Diable!* then you are not likely to accomplish any great things."

"I think I can defend myself."

"If only you could draw a sword as well as you ride!"

"Why, I hope I am as skilful at least at the one exercise as at the other."

"Fact?"

"Yes; but I have fenced only with foils."

"And you do not know how you will fight when once on the ground?"

"I know that I will fight, that is all, and without drawing back a step, I promise you."

"Ah! if you promise that," answered the marquis, "I am tranquil."

"I promise."

"Very well!"

The marquis donned his dressing-gown, adjusted his neck-scarf, and went to find the two brothers who were sitting on the markers' bench with their two friends, and who arose at his approach.

The gentlemen exchanged the usual civilities. The Messieurs de Kollinski had grown perfectly polite. It was quite simple; they were going to fight.

They fixed upon a rendezvous for four o'clock, and agreed to meet at the rear of the convent of the Filles-du-Saint-Sacrement.

Our four young men returned to the hôtel of the Marquis de Cretté.

"Faith, messieurs, this is a serious affair," said the marquis throwing himself on a sofa, and by a sign inviting his companions to do likewise.

"Why do you say that?" demanded d'Herbigny.

"Well! my dear vicomte, the Messieurs de Kollinski are absolutely determined to fight four against four."

"Well, are there not four of us?" said Tréville.

"Undoubtedly, baron; but for the second day that we have been together, I should be glad to keep the chevalier out of this business."

"And why me, more than another?" demanded Roger.

"Because, chevalier, a first affair — is a first affair."

"*Ah ça!* perhaps you Parisians, then, have discovered the way to begin with a second," returned Roger.

"No, not yet, it is true," said Cretté with a laugh.

"In that case, make use of me, I beg, monsieur," replied the chevalier; "if it is a matter of getting a sword-thrust, why, the deuce! I am as good as another."

"Very good!" exclaimed d'Herbigny. "That is the sort of talk I like."

"I will answer for the chevalier," declared Tréville.

"Chevalier, if we get out of this," said Cretté, "you shall be my friend. But do not deceive yourself. The Messieurs de Kollinski are accomplished duellists; they have fought with rapiers in their country from the time of Charles IX."

"Well, what of that, marquis? However terrible they may be, we will try to make up their party."

"So be it, then; but you are forewarned. There is still time for you to withdraw honorably, chevalier; and in your stead we can resort to Clos-Renaud who has a pretty stroke."

"I shall be greatly chagrined, marquis, if you repeat what you have just said. I am at your service and that of our Hungarians."

"Well, messieurs, at four o'clock, this evening," said Cretté. "Let us make our wills, for in all probability we shall have a warm time of it. Come with me, Roger, and I will give you a good sword; what you have there is only a hilt."

The marquis took leave of his companions, and he conducted Roger to a species of armory where there were swords of every magnitude, with hilts adapted to different hands.

Roger chose like an expert: he took a handsome blade, neither too long nor too short, not too heavy nor too light, a three-edged *carlet* as sharp as a needle, which widened a little fourteen or fifteen inches from the hilt in such a way as to give strength in parrying.

The marquis keenly observed the chevalier while he was making his choice.

"Come, come," he said; "I see that you have good enough judgment. Toss your sword into a corner,— it is good for nothing,— and put this one in its place. Excellent! This evening, behind the convent of the Filles-du-Saint-Sacrement, you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"Wait for me; I will call for you as I pass. Or, rather, on second thoughts, be here at two; we will have a bite together."

"You overwhelm me, marquis."

"There, there, don't use that word again; it is not current among friends, and it smells of Loches six leagues away."

Once returned to his hotel and shut within his room, Roger gave way to very lugubrious reflections. That remark about their wills, dropped by way of advice by the Marquis de Crettè, kept running through his head.

"*Parbleu!*" he exclaimed, "it would be an odd thing if I have come from Loches to Paris just to get myself killed."

With that, the chevalier rested his elbow on the table, leaned his head on his hand, and began to think of Con-

stance, of his mother, of the baron, of the delights of his native province, so real, and yet appreciated only when distant, whose reality was felt only when wanting; then he wrote a few pages to Constance, and to his father and mother, weeping quite openly as he went on writing.

He wept so much that he could at last weep no more; and besides, there was a magnificent sky, the sun shot across the window-bars a long stream of light, in which played millions of motes. Death does not look so ugly in fine weather; it has been remarked that many more people have been brave in August than in December.

Roger, therefore, tossed his head, took up the marquis' sword and unsheathed it; it weighed, in his robust hand, scarcely more than a foil. He drew at the wall, and went through a few exceedingly swift and vigorous passes in quarte and tierce; in short, he was in the end well pleased with himself, being convinced that he had lost none of his skill, although he had not touched a foil for nearly eighteen months.

By two o'clock he returned to the hôtel of the marquis. Cretté was awaiting him in the armory with d'Herbigny and Tréville.

A table was spread; on the table were some cutlets, a pâté, and two bottles only of old wine.

At the sight the chevalier declared that, having had only his chocolate at nine o'clock in the morning, he was literally perishing of hunger.

The three others chimed in chorus.

The repast was as gay as if they were to set out for the opera on leaving the table. Yet from time to time the chevalier felt a nervous spasm seize his heart; but the sensation was merely transient, nor was it strong enough to banish the smile from his lips.

They sat an hour at the table; but they drank not a

glassful more than the two bottles. The four friends embraced at the dessert.

"Listen, chevalier," said d'Herbigny, who passed for the best swordsman among the young gentlemen composing the Marquis de Cretté's set. "It was easy to see yesterday when you rode Marlborough, and to-day when you were playing tennis, that your legs are of iron and your arms of steel; do you flail that blackamoor of a Kollinski, for I am pretty certain that he will wish to deal with you,—and it is quite natural, since you so gallantly offered to run him through with your sword. He employs feints. Break his wrist for him, disable him, then you will have the advantage."

"In my second duel," responded the chevalier, "I will do that, perhaps, for, as my father has always told me, breaking a wrist is not running away; but in my first, *pardieu!* I will not recede a step, and, to make sure, I warn you that if there is a wall, I will set my back to it."

"That 's right! then he can pin you like a butterfly to the wainscot. No boasting, my dear fellow; remember that when he has finished with you, he will fall on our backs."

"I will try to give him enough to attend to without meddling in your little affairs," replied Roger.

"Amen!" was d'Herbigny's response.

"Amen!" repeated Cretté and Tréville.

All three put on their swords; the chevalier had not taken off his; then they entered a carriage.

Arrived at the corner of the convent of the Filles-du-Saint-Sacrement, Cretté pulled the strap; the coachman drew up; a little jockey sitting beside him descended and opened the door.

"You are to wait here, Basque," said the marquis,

" to see if any one comes, as we shall probably have much more need of a carriage returning than coming."

The four young men sprang to the ground.

" Well, how do you feel, Roger? " asked the marquis.

" I? I feel marvellously well, and to do credit to the company I am in, I would fight with the devil in person."

A second carriage arrived. Our young people's four adversaries descended. They were the Messieurs de Kollinski, the Comte de Gorkaün, a Saxon, and Monsieur de Bardane, an officer of the light-horse.

They advanced toward the Marquis de Cretté and saluted.

It befell with regard to Roger as Monsieur d'Herbigny had anticipated. The elder Kollinski was bent upon fighting him, and as Roger on his part wished to fight Kollinski, the discussion was not long.

The rest of the match was arranged as follows: the Marquis de Cretté engaged Kollinski the younger, d'Herbigny was content with Monsieur de Bardane, and Tréville with the Saxon.

They put themselves on guard, and as they were liable to interruption at any moment, they immediately crossed weapons.

The Marquis de Cretté received a sword-thrust in the wrist, d'Herbigny slew outright Monsieur de Bardane, and Tréville was killed by the Comte de Gorkaün.

As for Roger, he was, without suspecting it, a first-class swordsman; as he had promised, he did not yield a step. On the other hand, he lunged at his adversary three times: the first time, with a straight thrust, and he pierced his cheek; the second, with a parry and thrust, and he made a hole in his neck; the third, with a feint, and he ran him through the breast.

Monsieur de Kollinski, the elder, fell.

"*Peste!*" cried Cretté, who was sitting on the grass, "what a battering-ram that fellow is! he would break down a wall."

Seeing his brother fall, the younger Kollinski sprang at Roger, but his way was barred by d'Herbigny.

"One moment, monsieur," said d'Herbigny to the Hungarian. "If you are willing, I shall have the honor of serving you in the same fashion that my friend Roger has served monsieur, your brother."

And with that, he put aside Roger, who was rushing forward, maintaining that as he had begun with the family he wished to stay by it; but there was no time to continue the discussion.

The Saxon was upon him.

"Bardon, my tear monsieur," he was saying, "but I tink not we should stand mit folded arms."

"Unfold your arms, then," retorted Roger, resuming his guard.

"Be quick, be quick, messieurs!" cried Cretté; "Basque is signalling that some one is coming."

"Attend, attend," said Roger; "parry that!"

He lunged, and ran his sword through Comte de Gorkaün's shoulder.

"Monsieur," said the latter, gravely, "if efer you should gome to Dresden, I shall pe enchanted to entertain you."

"Monsieur," returned Roger, alive to the compliment, "you may count upon having my first visit."

The two adversaries saluted.

During this time the younger Kollinski and d'Herbigny were interchanging thrusts; d'Herbigny ran Kollinski through the hip, and Kollinski scratched his adversary's thigh.

At the summons of the Marquis de Cretté, the car-

riage came up at a gallop. Basque and Monsieur de Kollinski's coachman grouped Monsieur de Bardane and the Vicomte de Tréville together in such a manner that they might be supposed to have slain each other; the elder Kollinski, who was still alive, was borne to his carriage; his brother and the Saxon took their places beside him, and the carriage set off with the horses at a run. For their part, Cretté, d'Herbigny, and Roger sprang lightly into their own coach, and the horses bore them away at full speed.

"My dear chevalier," said the marquis, "I ask for your friendship, and in all sincerity offer you mine."

"And I, too," added d'Herbigny.

"You overwhelm me," was Roger's response.

"Roger, Roger," protested the marquis, "you know very well that you have agreed not to use that word to me again. *Sacredieu!* how my wrist pains me!"

"And poor Tréville," said d'Herbigny; "to think that I owed him two hundred pistoles!"

"What would you have, my dear fellow?" said the marquis; "that account is settled."

And all three re-entered the hôtel of the Marquis de Cretté, whence d'Herbigny and Roger did not emerge until after nightfall.

XII.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM BECOMES ACQUAINTED WITH THE SON OF THE EAST INDIAN, AND THE KIND OF PERSON HE FINDS HIM TO BE.

ALL these adventures had passed with the swiftness of a dream.

Roger had had time to live, it is true; but he had scarcely had leisure to perceive that he was living. He discussed this phenomenal activity with the Marquis de Cretté.

"My dear fellow," said the marquis, "that is the way we live in Paris. However, we shall lose our evening to-night, or I shall, at least, as my wrist will prevent my going out. But as for you, your two wrists are very sound. You can worthily employ your time from now to midnight."

"No, thank you," said Roger; "I shall not be sorry to return to my hotel. However, at the rate at which I am going, and with the example that I have before my eyes, I hope that in a week I shall be an accomplished cavalier."

"*Pardieu!* I can well believe that. You are not recognizable after these two days. Yet there is really one thing more urgent than the dinners at Saint Germain, the games of tennis at the Rue de Vaugirard, and the promenades back of the convent of the Filles-du-Saint-Sacrement. That is your lawsuit, and I advise you to attend to it."

"Such is my intention, indeed," replied d'Anguilhem; "and to-morrow I shall set about it."

"You understand, my dear fellow, that for all your business I place either coach or horse at your disposal. Only let me know every morning your hour and your wishes, and one or the other, as you choose, shall be at your door."

"And do you think I shall win my suit?" asked Roger.

"Ah! bless me, my dear fellow, you are asking more than I know. Were you to ask if I thought you could break Bucephalus, I should answer yes; whether I thought you could spit Berthelot and Boisrobert, our best fencing-masters, I should say it is quite possible; but, *peste!* my dear friend, a judge is not to be won over as a horse is broken or a man is killed. There are attorneys, tipstaves, counsellors, chief justices, administrators, creditors, a world of big-wigs, a hell of dirty rascals. You must first try to get the names of all these fellows. Then you will tell me, and then we will contrive to beguile some of them with fine words, and to bribe others with money."

"As for the fine words that is all very well," returned Roger; "and I am in funds so far as they are concerned. I studied rhetoric with the Abbé Dubuquoi, who is an intellectual fellow, and philosophy with the Jesuits of Amboise; but as for money, that is another thing. My father gave me fifty louis for six months' expenses, and in two days I have already made away with twenty pistoles."

"Well, my dear fellow, I have told you that among gentlemen there need be no anxiety about such matters. Help yourself from my purse. I have an income of sixty thousand livres, and if it were not for my steward

I should scarcely get rid of it. Take it, my dear fellow, take it. You shall pay it all back when you are a millionaire."

"And if I lose my suit?" demurred Roger.

"Well, what of that, chevalier? You would not need to hang yourself! We will take what is left of your money and sit down to a card-table. One cannot always lose. Fortune will owe you revenge, and she will give it to you."

"All that is rather precarious, my dear marquis, and I confess that the future does not look very rosy."

"Ah, yes! You have great reason to complain, it seems to me. What should Bardane and Tréville say if you are not satisfied? By the way, my dear Roger, if you are questioned on the subject, don't fail to say that they quarrelled at tennis, and that they ran each other through. If some busybody asks how you know, say that I told you."

"Very well," said Roger; and he prepared to leave.

"And one word more. Send to Kollinski's to-morrow morning to learn whether he is dead or alive. You certainly owe him that. If he is dead, rest his soul! all is over. If not, send every day until he either passes away or is cured. Did you not give the Saxon a little scratch, too?"

"I believe I ran him through the shoulder."

"Ah! you believe! Well, kill two birds with one stone, and send to both places at the same time."

"But their addresses?"

"Petitpas will take them to you in the morning."

"Who is Petitpas?"

"A messenger of mine."

"Well, a good-night to you, marquis."

"Thanks for the wish, but I am skeptical. My wrist

pains me as if possessed. That beast of a Kollinski might have given me a thrust somewhere else! What brutes those Hungarians are! Well, good-night, my friend, you know what to expect from to-day, — for life, for death between us."

On his way to his hôtel Roger reflected that, even if he had not killed, he had severely injured that day, a man; and he was astonished, in spite of the behests of God and the church, which command us to love our neighbor as ourselves, — he was astonished, I say, that he experienced no great amount of remorse.

More than that, when he saw Monsieur de Kollinski fall, far from any regret whatever, he had felt a sensation of the keenest joy, so true is it that the instinct of self-preservation overrides every other sentiment.

However, one fact came to Roger's relief in the midst of the low opinion that he was forming of himself, — the fact that between his two friends scarcely had mention been made of poor Tréville who had been slain, save that, as we have said, after his death, d'Herbigny had recalled his indebtedness to him of a hundred louis, a circumstance that, perhaps, might not have been so faithfully recalled to mind had Tréville lived.

And yet Cretté and d'Herbigny had been intimately acquainted with Tréville for ten or twelve years.

But, on the other hand, Tréville undoubtedly had a father, a mother, a sweetheart, whom his death would plunge into deep mourning. Roger shuddered when he thought that he, too, had all these, and that it had been quite possible that, at the very time when he was making these reflections, he himself, Roger, might have been lying in Tréville's place.

The thought made the chevalier double his speed, for

he was in great haste to write to Anguilhem and pour out to those he loved all the sentiments of which his heart was full.

Roger wrote indeed to his father and to his mother. He was so happy that his joy broke over him in floods. It is such a delight to live when one has but just escaped death, and when to the happiness of preservation is added the pride of triumph! Then, still another thing helped to reassure Roger. He would never hereafter feel that beating of the heart which is the uncertainty of the brave. He knew his own skill, and others knew it.

He entreated his mother not to forget that, after the love he bore her and his father, the one and only sentiment of his heart was for Mademoiselle de Beuzerie. He begged that she would let it be known in the country that, being admitted to the intimacy of the Marquis de Cretté, he was starting out in Paris in good shape. Then he described in detail his costumes, slipped in a few words about his rising reputation, and asked if the other fifty louis could not be forwarded soon. At the last came a postscript of a page and a half in length for Constance.

In his letter to the baron, — for the chevalier would have regarded it as sacrilege to confound his heart affairs with business matters, — in his letter to the baron Roger explained at length the apprehensions of Maître Coquenard. He outlined the critical position in which the case involved the little fortune of Anguilhem, and, as at bottom the conceited youth, convinced that nothing could now withstand him, did not doubt of winning his suit, he took pleasure in exaggerating the difficulties that he might seem the more gloriously victorious.

The postscript of this second letter was consecrated to

Christopher, who was living at ease and on the fat of the land in the stables of The Golden Harrow.

Yet the business which had brought Roger to Paris was in progress. Monsieur de Bouzenois had died of an apoplectic attack without signifying by word or writing his intentions, for the worthy gentleman had believed himself still to have ten or twelve good years of life ahead. His hôtel, in the Place Louis-le-Grand, was suddenly deserted. The son of the East Indian, — thus the woman was always spoken of whom the Vicomte de Bouzenois had brought from beyond the sea, — the son of the East Indian, I say, had come forward to take possession, but as he had neither title nor established rights, the seals had been put on the house, and the property sequestered.

Roger had promised himself to visit the hôtel at the very first opportunity. He therefore took advantage of the occasion when he was leaving his card at Monsieur de Kollinski's, who lived in the Rue des Capucines, and Monsieur le Comte de Gorkaün's, who resided in the neighborhood of La Ferme-des-Mathurins, to pause, in passing, in front of his future property.

He recognized it by the uninhabited appearance of its sealed doors and windows. It was a grand and handsome hôtel which might of itself have been worth three hundred thousand livres, an enormous sum in those days. Roger remarked a stone escutcheon upon which was graven the dead man's coat of arms, and upon which he promised himself that his own should be graven as soon as the probable winning of his suit would permit his vanity that little gratification. To be brief, he came and went before the hôtel in order to view it under every aspect, when he noticed a gentleman who, having arrived at almost the same time as he, was performing the same

manœuvres with an air as preoccupied as his own. For that reason he observed the gentleman the more attentively.

He was a man to whom it was almost impossible to assign a definite age, although it was evident that it must lie between twenty-five and forty years. An orange-yellow hue overspread his face and even encroached upon the whites of his eyes. He had small white teeth, jet-black hair, a coat whose seams were covered with lace, and whose color was most striking, two watch-chains, and rings on every finger. At the other side of the street there waited for him a great gilded coach, on the box of which sat a coachman still yellower than he. To the door clung a valet in the costume of a Lascar who was yellower still than the coachman.

At the same time that Roger appeared to remark this strange-looking personage, the latter also seemed to observe Roger. Both repeatedly and successively conveyed their glances from the hôtel to the other and from the other to the hôtel. Then the great door of the hôtel aforesaid being half-opened to give passage to a sort of steward habited in black, the two observers hastened to the doorway at the same moment and thrust their heads into the opening, and that, too, with such precipitation that their heads met in collision.

Roger, who was very well-bred, offered apologies to the unknown. As for the unknown, he gave utterance to a sort of low growl which might have been interpreted to mean, —

"The deuce! that rascal is no soft-pate."

Thereupon both together exclaimed, —

"My faith, this is a fine hôtel!"

"Is it not so, monsieur?"

"That is my opinion," was the stranger's response.

"And when the grass that is beginning to dot the court has been weeded out — "

"And when a coat of paint has been given to the shutters and doors — "

"And when all is enlivened in the daytime by handsome carriages and horses — "

"Illumined at night by a thousand lights — "

"Faith! I shall have one of the most magnificent hôtels in Paris," declared Roger.

"Your pardon, monsieur," said the stranger; "you mean to say that I shall have one of the most magnificent hôtels in Paris."

"Not at all. I did not say you; I said *I*."

"But who, pray, are you?"

"I am the cousin of Monsieur de Bouzenois."

"And I, monsieur, am his stepson."

"What! you are the Indian?"

"And you are the provincial?"

"Monsieur," said Roger, "the word is not polite. I am from the province, it is true, but I am not provincial for all that. I am the friend of Monsieur le Marquis de Cretté, of Monsieur le Vicomte d'Herbigny, of Monsieur le Chevalier de Clos-Renaud, and yesterday I gave three sword-thrusts to a Hungarian who was a head taller than you."

"Well, monsieur, what do you mean by that?"

"I mean, monsieur," replied Roger, "that as I have had the honor of meeting you, I shall do myself the honor of making you a proposition."

"Of compromise?"

"Yes, monsieur, of compromise."

"Of what nature? Proceed."

"It is this. Come around with me to the rear of the

convent of the Filles-du-Saint-Sacrement, and as man's judgment is always fallible, let us, like the chevaliers of old, confide the decision of our suit to the judgment of God."

"Why, you are proposing a duel!" cried the Indian, turning from orange-yellow to pale yellow.

"If you kill me," continued Roger, "the hôtel is yours beyond dispute. If I kill you that is the end of the lawsuit."

"Excuse me, monsieur," replied the Indian, regaining his coach; "I am sure of winning my suit, but I am not sure of giving you a sword-thrust. We will abide then, if you are willing, by the judgment of man."

And the Indian entered his coach and set off at full speed, after closing it even to the sashes of the doors.

"*Pardieu!*" exclaimed Roger, "there goes an original!"

And he proceeded to inscribe his name at Monsieur de Kollinski's, who was still alive, and at the Comte de Gorkaün's, who was as comfortable as circumstances permitted.

After which he returned to report to the Marquis de Cretté, to whom he also related his conversation with the Indian.

The marquis suffered constant pain from his wrist, which, however, had not prevented his paying two or three morning calls in order to mislead people who might have heard that he had fought and had been wounded. The precaution was not unnecessary, for the duel of the preceding day had made a great stir, but as it had been impossible to lay hands upon any one, and as the two dead men had maintained the profoundest silence, no one was compromised.

Nothing, therefore, prevented the marquis from tak-

ing up the chevalier's case, and making his visits along with him.

There were three chief judges and the *conseiller-rapporteur.*

The chevalier and the marquis began by visiting the judges. They were three eccentrics, having each a decided liking for different animals. One adored his cat, another his ape, the third his parrot. The chevalier was very friendly with the three judges, and the marquis was very attentive to the three animals; but as soon as either of them wished to broach the subject of the suit, the judges gave the gentlemen to understand that they would much prefer to speak of other matters.

As to the *conseiller-rapporteur*, he was a Puritan, and so austere that he refused even to receive them.

"*Peste!*" exclaimed the marquis; "it looks to me like a bad omen."

However, they learned one fine morning that the case was evoked at the Palais. Two months had rolled by, for it had required at least two months to draw up the official report, to complete the inventories, and to investigate the relative titles of the claimants. During all this time Roger had debated whether it were not best to effect a compromise with the son of the East Indian. But the marquis was opposed to all overtures of such a nature, while the Indian everywhere announced that his case was not at all doubtful, and that he could furnish the court a document so authentic that the Messieurs d'Anguilhem, father and son, would, to their confusion, find their pretensions overruled.

Meanwhile the business dragged on at its usual pace. Justice is not only blind, but halt and lame as well. The chevalier felt a keen distaste for all these excursions to the Palais and the Saint-Chapelle. However,

every eighth day found his coach, or rather, the Marquis de Cretté's coach, in the neighborhood, — the day, usually, after the baron's weekly letter.

Had not Roger been in some sort the guest of the Marquis de Cretté, had he not found in him friend, banker, and adviser all in one, he might of necessity have resolved to proffer a compromise to the son of the Indienne, who was waging the war with plenty of money.

But that unfortunate "authentic" document especially tormented Roger. As for the Baron d'Anguilhem, to whom every new letter from his son brought a new subject for anxiety, he no longer slept.

"Try," he always wrote, "to discover what that vaunted document is, whether it is an entail, a will, or a deed of gift."

Roger sought and found not.

He assembled his council, composed of the Marquis de Cretté, d'Herbigny, Clos-Renaud, and Chastellux, to learn what he should do. He had been told of one Sieur Viellère, who engaged in all sorts of clandestine transactions, such as gaining information from secret papers, gauging the contents of hermetically sealed boxes, or the abstraction even of deeds and titles. It is clearly to be understood that it was not now proposed to steal the document from the other party, but to procure a copy in order to aid the advocates in defeating it. The council of gentlemen unanimously repelled this proposition as dishonorable.

One day d'Herbigny thought that he had discovered a means of assisting matters. As he was passing the Porte de la Conférence he recognized, from the description that Roger had given of him, the Indian, who was coming through the gate in his coach with a woman who

had once been the viscount's mistress, and who was, it would appear, on the best of terms with Roger's adversary. Like a devoted friend, d'Herbigny believed that here was a chance to terminate the lawsuit in which languished the fortunes and the peace of Anguilhem.

Thereupon he made a sign to the coachman to stop, very impudently approached the door, staring meanwhile at the lady who belonged to the Comédie-Française and was called Mademoiselle Poussette. Mademoiselle Poussette, recognizing the viscount of whom she had once been very fond, smiled affectionately.

"*Pardieu!* monsieur and madame," said d'Herbigny, "what say you to a little supper for us three? It seems to me that we should enjoy it — "

"I do not know you," sharply replied the Indian, whose eyes turned perfectly yellow, "and I do not eat with strangers."

"But madame knows me, and she will tell you that I belong to good society. Poussette, my dear," continued d'Herbigny, "I beg that you will do me the favor of presenting me to monsieur."

"Let me introduce Monsieur le Vicomte d'Herbigny," said Poussette, laughing at her old lover's impertinence.

"Ah! very good — d'Herbigny — d'Herbigny," repeated the Indian. "I remember that name. You are a friend of that little d'Anguilhem, and you have come to pick a quarrel with me in order to secure his succession to Monsieur de Bouzenois' estate. Try that elsewhere, my fine gentleman. My lawyer has warned me against such accidents!"

"I have the honor to be one of the friends of Monsieur d'Anguilhem, who, by the way, is a head taller than you or I. But you have put upon me a mortal affront by attributing to me such an intention. And so,

monsieur, I regard you as an ill-bred savage, and I beg you to state when and where my seconds may confer with yours."

"Good! you persist in your purpose, only you take another road. You are still bent upon a quarrel. Well, let me win my case, and then we shall see about it."

This conclusion seemed such a burlesque to d'Herbigny that he burst out laughing.

"*Pardieu!*" he exclaimed to the Malabar, "you are a good-natured Indian, and I should be delighted to have supper with you, only for the pleasure of making your further acquaintance. If you are so agreeable when fasting, you must be charming when drunk."

"Another way of inheriting," returned the Indian. "You would poison me."

"Ah! you are a buffalo!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Poussette. "I will not remain an instant longer in your coach. Open the door, vicomte. I will have supper with you."

D'Herbigny opened the door and Mademoiselle Poussette leaped to the pavement. Then, after taking leave of the nabob, the one with a bow, the other with a courtesy, they walked away together, arm in arm.

And then Mademoiselle Poussette informed him that the other was the most ridiculous man that she had ever seen; that he could talk of nothing but his inheritance, saw on all sides only emissaries of the chevalier, and that he had this very day demanded of the criminal lieutenant an escort, which he was on the point of obtaining.

This seemed important to d'Herbigny, who, on leaving Mademoiselle Poussette's the next morning, hastened to the Marquis de Cretté's and related the circumstance

to him. The marquis augured from it that the Indian had already expended a great deal of money, without counting that he was besides undoubtedly supported by the Naval Department, with which Monsieur de Bouzenois had been on excellent terms.

In his last letter Roger had acquainted his father with these unpleasant details.

Day by day the indications became more alarming. Soon a rumor was spread that the son of the East Indian had exhibited to the three judges the document upon which he relied for the support of his pretensions, and that the three judges had assured him of the successful issue of his cause. This news fell like a thunder-bolt on the Anguilhem party. The matter began to be regarded as desperate by the little group of gentlemen. They were already considering how to raise the money necessary to defray the enormous expenses of the examination, and the damages likely to be awarded to Monsieur de Bouzenois' stepson, for the Baron d'Anguilhem had appeared as plaintiff in the case. The expenses were estimated at six thousand livres. In addition Maître Coquenard laid claim to an honorarium of four thousand livres. Roger's sojourn, with the advances made by his friends, had cost almost five thousand livres. The case being lost, nothing would remain to the baron of all his little fortune, and the day was approaching when the sad truth was about to be revealed to him.

The Marquis de Cretté's behavior toward Roger was perfect under the circumstances. He offered him ten thousand crowns payable at his convenience; but Roger replied that neither he nor his father could accept a sum which they knew in advance that they would be unable to repay. He then declared that he would meet the

blow with his own resources, and that in case of necessity he would enlist in one of the regiments setting out for Flanders.

D'Herbigny, too, did everything in his power. Thanks to his influence with Mademoiselle Poussette, he prevailed on her to return to the Indian, in order to make sure of the existence of that document, and if the document had no existence, to discover on what resources Roger's adversary relied.

As for Roger, he sought out his advocates, Maître Branchu and Maître Verniquet, and begged them to overlook nothing in their pleadings; but, despite all the vanity natural to practitioners, they shook their heads and deplored having been retained in such a bad cause. Roger was urgent, and they confessed that the three judges to whom they had spoken had left them little ground for hope. They advised Roger to go back and make desperate overtures to the cat, the ape, and the parrot, which were such delights to those respectable jurists. But it was advice given as doctors prescribe health resorts, — that they should not have to reproach themselves with negligence of any sort. Had they known, they said, that the defence was in possession of a title which, it was asserted, could be supported, nothing in the world could have induced them to take charge of his case. Roger, who neither dared nor was able to promise them mountains of gold, hung his head before these alarming previsions, and as he was only his father's man of business, he faithfully transmitted to him all that was unpleasant in the lawyers' reluctant attitude.

But it was in his letter to his mother that his despair burst forth. To her he deplored not only the loss of the suit and the consequent loss of his fortune, but that

most cruel loss of all, the loss of Constance. For, amid all his dinners, his duels, his drives, and his visits, to the chevalier's credit let us say, the image of Constance had not for a moment left his heart.

He confided to Cretté the advice given him by his counsel to attempt a last assault upon the judges. He stuffed his pockets with cakes for the cat, almonds for the ape, and macaroons for the parrot; but, far from being sensible of these attentions, the cat scratched him, the ape bit him, and the parrot called him a country lout.

"You are a ruined man!" exclaimed the marquis, on leaving the house of the third judge. "You will lose with costs."

That evening the conduct of the jurists and their respective pets was explained to Roger and his companions by Mademoiselle Poussette. As the judges were men of probity, they would not have been willing to accept bribes. But the Indian had given a ring worth two thousand pistoles to the cat, had donated ten thousand crowns to the ape, and had bestowed a life-annuity of three thousand livres upon the parrot.

As to the *conseiller-rapporteur*, all attentions had been thrown away upon him. His door had been constantly closed against the Indian as well as Roger, and no one knew of any beast, savage or domestic, to which one could offer jewelled rings, make donations, or present life-annuities.

Roger and the marquis tried a last attack upon him, but with no greater success than had attended the first.

Such an upright man was Maître Bouteau, the *conseiller-rapporteur!*

As may be supposed, all these successive disappointments had, in spite of his light-hearted nature, gradually

led the chevalier into a deep melancholy. The prospect of the ruin of his entire family, of the loss of Constance, whom he had found again only to be separated from her the second time yet more cruelly than the first, and of enlistment as a simple volunteer in the Royal-Italien, the Picardie, or the Nivernais, all held nothing but despair. The chevalier, too, abandoned himself to hopelessness, and was unwilling to listen to any consolation. He refused all the diversions proposed by his friends in their efforts to distract his mind, and spent his time in his room at The Golden Harrow writing to his mother or composing elegies to Constance. For we must add that, as a last misfortune along with the melancholy, a taste for poetry had come upon him.

XIII.

HOW, JUST AS THE CHEVALIER HAD FALLEN A PREY TO THE PROFOUNDEST DESPAIR, A STRANGER VISITED HIM TO MAKE A PROPOSITION NOT EXPECTED BY HIM NOR BY THE READER.

One morning, while Roger was viewing himself in a small mirror to see how grief became him, and was at the same time putting the finishing touches to a very bad, but excessively tender, quatrain intended for Mademoiselle Constance de Beuzerie, just as he had hit upon a rhyme sufficiently exquisite to end the last line, there came three knocks at his chamber-door.

"Come in," answered d'Anguilhem.

The door slowly opened, and the person who had knocked entered.

He was a man whose countenance bore a strong resemblance to the fox; he was evidently an habitué of the Palais, a sort of hanger-on, a rat of La Sainte-Chapelle. During the four months that Roger had been frequenting the Salle des Pas-Perdus he had learned to recognize the lowest tool of Themis by his claw-like fingers and hooked beak.

The visitor had red hair which was plastered upon the forehead, a great purple wart on each cheek, an eye as changing as the opal, a great void between the teeth of the upper jaw, and a sharp chin, the underside of which hollowed out rather than projected upward from the throat.

"Good!" exclaimed Roger to himself, "here is some new exploit adduced for my benefit; if it should be necessary to pay the expense at once, I shall have to part with my last pistole. No matter, let us put on a bold face."

And, with a moderately firm bearing, he awaited the man with the warts.

The man with the warts bowed profoundly.

"Have I the honor to address Monsieur Roger Tancrède, Chevalier d'Anguilhem, of La Guérite, La Pintade, and other estates?"

Roger reflected that were he still lord of all those seigneuries, he was on the road to be disembarrassed of them, a reflection which, although he was astonished at the preamble, did not prevent his replying quite steadily, —

"Yes, monsieur, I am he."

"Is there nobody," continued the man with the warts, "who might be concealed in the closet that I observe back of your alcove?"

"Nobody, monsieur," replied Roger; "and permit me to remark that the question seems a strange one."

"Yet nothing could be simpler, monsieur; you might have had with you either a mistress or a friend. You are too handsome a fellow and too good a comrade to be wanting either. You might, I say, have had with you a mistress or a friend, and, in order to receive me more at your ease, have employed the closet as a place of concealment."

"I was alone, monsieur," insisted the chevalier, "and that closet is quite solitary."

"Will you permit me to assure myself?" returned the man with the warts.

"*Parbleu!* monsieur; it appears strange that you do not believe my word."

"Oh! I believe you, monsieur le chevalier," said the unknown, slowly edging his way toward the closet, "I believe you, for I know you to be a man of honor; however, without your permission or your knowledge, some indiscreet person may have slipped in —"

And the visitor partly opened the door and thrust in his little weasel-like head.

"Well," said he, "nobody is here."

"What the deuce can this queer individual wish with me?" the chevalier asked himself.

"And the walls," continued the man with the warts, "are they thick?"

"My faith! go and examine them, monsieur," cried d'Anguilhem; "you are really beginning to try my patience."

"Don't fly into a passion, monsieur, don't fly into a passion. I very humbly ask your pardon for taking all these precautions; but you will presently understand that they are strictly necessary."

"Then, proceed, monsieur, proceed; look into the wardrobes, under my bed, behind the curtains, and, if you wish the keys of the commode and the secretary, ask for them, — make yourself quite at home."

The unknown profited by the permission, opening the wardrobes, looking under the bed, searching behind the curtains, and casting a scrutinizing glance at the two pieces of furniture aforesaid, to assure himself that they were not of a shape to conceal a lurking listener; but as both undoubtedly seemed too restricted to be employed for such a purpose, he politely declined by a wave of his hand the keys which Roger had already drawn from his pocket, and which, upon this refusal, he replaced.

"Now, monsieur le chevalier," said the unknown, "now that I am quite sure that we are alone, I have the

honor to beg you to listen to me seriously, for I have come to speak to you on a matter of the highest importance."

"Good or bad?"

"Take your choice," answered the man with the warts; "it will be what you make it."

And he went to the door, turned the key, and shot the two bolts.

Roger cast a furtive glance at the fauteuil where lay his sword, beginning to think, like the Indian, that some one might have been despatched to do him an ill turn.

The man with the warts intercepted the glance, endeavored to reassure Roger at once by smile and gesture, and advanced a chair to the fauteuil in which Roger was sitting.

By an involuntary movement, Roger pushed back his chair.

The stranger remarked this second movement, as he had already remarked the first, and indulged in a hideous little smile as if to say, "Yes, yes, I see indeed that you have no great confidence in me; but wait a little."

Roger waited. The man with the warts cast a look around him, as if the certainty of being alone with the chevalier could not satisfy him, and bending toward his ear, he said, —

"Monsieur, have you any repugnance to marriage?"

"To marriage?" echoed Roger, with stupefaction.

"To marriage," repeated the stranger, wagging his head with the same hideous smile that seemed habitual to him.

"But to what marriage?" demanded Roger.

"How! to what marriage? why, a real marriage."

"I do not understand," said Roger; "but pray go on."

"Then," said the stranger, "I will put the question differently."

"Proceed, monsieur."

"Do you wish to win your suit?"

"*Têtebleu!* I should say so," cried Roger, "and very much indeed."

"Well, well," returned the man with the warts, smiling his peculiar smile, "we shall come to an understanding."

"Let us hear," said Roger, as he imparted a slight movement to his fauteuil.

"Well, monsieur," continued the unknown, "I am the man that can put you in a way to win that suit of yours. Ah!"

In his enthusiasm, Roger was drawing close to the man with the hideous smile, and seemed as if ready to put his arms around his neck.

Poor human nature, which thinks it has sympathies and antipathies, and has only interests!

"What is to be done?" demanded Roger.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* almost nothing," replied the stranger.

"But what?"

"You must marry."

Roger scanned this man a second time, but more narrowly than at first, and he began to conceive the idea that he had to do with a lunatic.

"I shall be fortunate if he does not grow violent," thought Roger.

Then, as the silence was prolonged, Roger having contented himself with the mental observation, and this response not sufficing the man with the warts, the latter demanded, —

"Well?"

"You say, then —" hazarded Roger.

"I say, Monsieur d'Anguilhem, that you must marry."

"I marry? I?"

"You yourself, in person; another would not answer at all!"

"Come, now, you are jesting!" exclaimed Roger.

"Had I the honor to be better known to you," replied the messenger of Hymen, "you would know, monsieur, that I never jest."

"Then, the question becomes serious?"

"Extremely serious, monsieur. I beg, therefore, that you will consider it from that point of view."

"And so I must marry?"

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* yes."

"And whom?" demanded Roger with an effort.

"Ah! whom?" returned the man with the warts, with a repetition of that horrible smile; "ah! whom? There you let slip the great question!"

"Certainly, whom?" repeated Roger. "Do you think, indeed, that I will marry with my head in a bag?"

"It is just the way that you must marry, Monsieur d'Anguilhem."

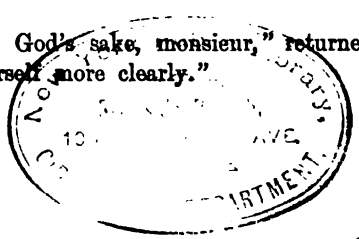
"Are you quite sure that you are in your right mind?" demanded Roger.

"What! Am I quite sure?"

"Yes; because, if not, as the joke might be carried on a long time in this vein, I must confess that I am pressed for time. I have an engagement, and I should like at once to terminate the game we are playing."

"It is no game; not the least in the world, monsieur," replied the stranger with a very serious air. "Or, if it is a game, it is one, at least, in which your entire future is at stake, since you can win fifteen hundred thousand livres."

"Then, for God's sake, monsieur," returned Roger, "explain yourself more clearly."



"Are you in love?" demanded the man with the warts, as he fixed upon Roger his little opaline eyes, whose regard seemed to the latter literally to penetrate the depths of his soul.

"As for that," said Roger, blushing deeply, "you must excuse me, monsieur, from replying."

"Since you demand that I respect your secret, monsieur," retorted the unknown, "I have the same right to demand that you respect mine."

"But you, — it is very different."

"In what way?"

"You should tell me, me especially — "

"On the contrary, monsieur le chevalier, you are the last person whom I should tell. However, I do not forbid your guessing."

"Ah! that is very kind; thanks for the permission, monsieur; unfortunately, I am not good at enigmas."

"In that case, it is a study that you should enter upon, since, for my part, I can only repeat what I have already said."

"Monsieur," said Roger, rising, "you understand — "

"Yes, monsieur, I understand that you are a disinterested person," interrupted the stranger, rising also, "and it matters little to you whether you lose or win your suit. A bagatelle, after all, for a gentleman like you, — only a sum of fifteen hundred thousand livres, more or less."

"*Peste!*" exclaimed Roger, "a bagatelle! not at all, monsieur. I do not regard it in that light; but, frankly, just consider: certainly I cannot marry thus, — it is absurd!"

"Monsieur, monsieur," said the stranger with an air of profound commiseration for Roger's ignorance, "I tell you that you do not know what you are refusing."

"But, in short, monsieur, if I should consent to consider the proposition, what is to be done?"

"A proposition of this sort, monsieur, once considered, must be carried out."

"Then it is a positive contract that you require?"

"Positive."

"And I agree to marry —"

"The name is blank."

"This is not common sense."

"Yet permit —"

"Never, monsieur, never!"

"That is your last word?"

"The last, — it is final."

"Reflect again."

"I have reflected, or rather, I will not reflect on such an absurdity. I to marry? I, without knowing whom, without having seen my intended, without having spoken to her, without knowing whether she is young or old, beautiful or ugly, stupid or intellectual! Come, come, my dear man, you are losing your head!"

"And you, your suit, monsieur!"

And the stranger took his hat.

This devil of a man possessed so much assurance that Roger was disconcerted. He strode about the room; he paced from alcove to window, from door to commode, and at last fell back into his arm-chair with a stealthy glance at his interlocutor, who, with the most natural manner in the world, was alternately scratching his warts and his chin.

"What!" exclaimed Roger, the first to break the silence, "what! monsieur, do you absolutely refuse to give me even the least information?"

"Upon my honor, monsieur, I am willing," answered the stranger, "but I am expressly forbidden."

"Only tell me if the young person — h'm!" broke off Roger, "— but is she young?"

The unknown continued to scratch his warts.

"Come, — is she beautiful or ugly?"

The unknown passed from his warts to his chin.

"But certainly I shall be permitted to inquire whether my fiancée is maid or widow."

The unknown remained impassive.

"Ah!" exclaimed Roger, striking his forehead, "it would be a mad thing to do!"

"I will give you until to-morrow, monsieur, to reflect on my proposition," said the stranger.

"And to-morrow?"

"To-morrow I will return at this hour."

"Alone?"

"No; I will bring the contract with me."

"The contract?"

"Oh, that binds you to nothing," said the unknown; "you will not sign it unless you like. Be tranquil, my gentleman," added he with his habitual smile, "you will not be kidnapped."

So saying, the mysterious man backed out, bowing still lower than he had done on entering, and when he was far away, Roger still sat, dismayed, his brow, humid with perspiration, held between his hot and trembling hands.

XIV.

HOW THE MYSTERIOUS MAN APPEARS A SECOND TIME, AND HOW, IN THIS SECOND INTERVIEW, MATTERS SEEM A LITTLE CLEARER.

Roger remained some time under the weight of the blow that had just been dealt him; but at last, gathering himself together, he rose, took his hat, and hastened to the Marquis de Cretté, his staunch support, his constant resource.

Happily, the marquis was at home.

"What is the matter?" he cried, on seeing the chevalier. "Have you lost your suit?"

The marquis put this question to the chevalier, so agitated was the other's countenance.

"No, thank God, not yet," answered Roger. "The decision is to be rendered, you know, in three days; and I even —"

"Even what?" repeated the marquis.

"I even have some hope of winning," continued Roger with a sigh.

"It seems to me that there is nothing in that to call for such a sigh as you have just given."

"Of course it seems so to you; you know nothing of the conditions."

"Ah! there are conditions?"

"Alas!" exclaimed Roger.

And he threw himself into his friend's arms.

"Come, speak," cried the marquis; "you really alarm me."

The chevalier then told the marquis of his interview with the man of the opaline eyes. Cretté listened to the recital with the greatest attention; then, when the chevalier had ended, he exclaimed, —

"This is a queer piece of business! Is it some bastard of Bouzenois' that they wish to provide for, — or, *grand Dieu!* my poor friend, it may be — "

"May be what?" cried the chevalier, turning pale at the marquis' forebodings.

"It may be that the old begum herself thinks of marrying again."

Roger shivered to the very marrow of his bones; but one reflection reassured him.

"Impossible," said he; "she is dead."

"Then it is improbable that you have anything to fear from that source."

"For all that," said Roger, "I have known of people who were thought dead, but they came back."

"Ah! *mon Dieu!*" ejaculated the marquis.

"However," continued d'Anguilhem, "I do not think it is so, in this case."

"Then let us seek for some other solution. What if it were a snare of your opponent's? What do you say?"

"I have thought of that; but what interest could Monsieur Afghano have in getting me married?"

We forgot to say that the Indian answered to the name of Afghano.

"No one knows; you must distrust him always."

"Yes, certainly I distrust him; but my distrust will not gain me a day longer. To-morrow I must give an answer of some sort."

"Consult your father."

"But my father is fifty leagues from here; besides, I must confess, marquis, I do not see how I can marry in

such a way. I idolize a young girl in my part of the country, a love, an angel, one who is attached to me with an affection equal to mine for her, and who will die if I marry another."

"Do you think so?" said Cretté, putting out his lips with a skeptical air.

"I am sure of it; I have her word."

"As to dying?"

"No, but as to her living for me alone."

And then Roger related to the marquis all his adventures with Constance, but without pronouncing the latter's name.

"What can you do, my dear fellow? After that, you have no chance to reflect. Do you love mademoiselle — is it indiscreet to ask mademoiselle's name?"

"No; her name is Constance de Beuzerie."

"The deuce! the first name is suggestive, I admit."

"You were asking — ?"

"I was asking if you love Mademoiselle de Beuzerie more than you love an income of sixty thousand livres."

"If I had but myself to consider, I should love her more than fortune, more than life, more than all; but unhappily I have a father and a mother who worship me and whom I ruin by refusing."

"Yes, you are right," said Cretté; "there lies your real obligation. This, my dear friend, as you well understand, is a question of conscience that you alone can solve."

Roger gave a deep sigh.

For his part, the Marquis de Cretté became silent and relapsed into a long reverie; then, of a sudden, he seized Roger's hand with a movement so brusque as to startle the latter.

"You are a thrice-lost man!" he declared. "I divine the source of these propositions."

"Ah!" exclaimed Roger in affright.

"The gentleman with the warts is some judge, some associate, some tip-staff, with a hunch-backed daughter, and he feels the need of establishing her advantageously."

"Marquis, I entreat you not to say such things; you make my flesh creep."

"My dear, one must speak the truth to one's friends!"

"Alas!" groaned Roger.

"However," pursued the marquis, "speak of it to your father, and ask his opinion, but, in my mind, there is no doubt on the subject."

"There might be still another case!" responded the victim, dwelling on each word with a lamentable accent. "It might be that one of these gentlemen whom you have just mentioned has a daughter who —"

"I thought of that," replied Cretté, "but I did not like to say it. Of the two defects, which would you prefer? As for me, I confess that I should choose the incurable deformity."

"It is a horrible trap," cried Roger, in a rage.

"You must decide, however," said the marquis; "there is no middle course. It is a matter of losing your suit, or of leaping into a gulf blindfold."

"Alas! Alas!" reiterated Roger.

"My poor friend," said Cretté, whom the chevalier's situation touched, even to tears, "you are in a trap; but you need not give up all hope before the second visit. Take advantage of the opportunity, when you get hold of that devil of a man, to turn him inside out; demand information; insist on knowing the necessity. If he refuses you, do you refuse him. I will be concealed at the door, I will follow the demon even to hell, and we shall at least have the satisfaction of getting our revenge, I will answer for that."

"Yes, but I shall lose my suit."

"Ah! pshaw! what of that? You cannot have everything."

As all that the chevalier and the marquis could suggest in no way advanced matters, Roger took his way back to his hotel, and re-entered The Golden Harrow.

Roger then sat down to write to his father; but he reflected that a letter required four days to go to Loches and four to return, which made eight days, supposing even that the baron answered by return post. Now, judgment was to be rendered within three days; it was therefore, literally impossible to receive a seasonable answer from Anguilhem. The poor fellow, however, indeed needed an impulse from his father in order to come to any decision.

He remained then, confronting himself, shedding bitter tears, his hands plucking at his hair, despairing of the future, and calling aloud upon Constance, La Pintade, La Guérite, the woods of Garenne, upon all the memories, in short, of his youth; and then he reproached himself with his unsophisticated foolishness, and admired the profound speeches of the marquis, when the latter, listening to Roger's narration of his pastoral amours at Beuzerie, the apparition of Constance in Roger's room, and the flight of both to La Chapelle Saint-Hippolyte, had cried, —

"How unsophisticated you were, d'Anguilhem! How artless you were, my handsome Roger! — ah, but you were silly, my poor friend!"

And Roger repeated, —

"Ah yes, I was very silly; yes, I was very artless; yes, yes, I was very unsophisticated!"

It can be seen that his sojourn in Paris began to operate efficaciously upon Roger.

But necessity was there, stretching out her ruthless hand, armed with its gads of iron. Every minute was worth a day, every day had the importance of a year. On the morrow would return the man with the warts, as inexorable as time, as punctual as death.

Roger spent the night in seeking a way to extricate himself from his position; needless to say, he found none.

The day came. Armed with a mass of new propositions, an arsenal of insidious questions, Roger awaited the man with the warts.

The man did not keep him waiting long. At the very hour, the very minute, the very second designated, Roger, who sat with listening ear, heard the sound of his step on the stairs; then at last, at the words, "Come in!" pronounced by Roger with trembling voice, the door opened, and the fatal emissary entered, humbler, blander, more obsequious than he had been on the day before.

With a sweeping glance around, his eyes took in the whole room.

"You are quite alone?" he asked.

"Look for yourself," d'Anguilhem answered.

The unknown renewed his inspection with the same minuteness of detail that he had employed on the former occasion; then, his inspection concluded, he approached Roger, who was sitting in his chair, as pale as a condemned man exposed upon a scaffold.

"Well, monsieur le chevalier," said the mysterious man, "have you reflected?"

"I have done more, indeed," answered Roger, "I have made a guess, monsieur; and so, let us speak frankly, and make an end of the matter with the present interview."

"It is my most ardent wish, monsieur," replied the unknown.

"You are sent by some one that wishes to get rid of his daughter."

"To get rid of? Oh! monsieur, that is a harsh expression."

"Let us not cavil at the phrase, — I am, unfortunately, but too certain that it is the correct one."

"Nevertheless, I would undertake to change your opinion."

"Now, this father is one of my judges, is he not?" asked Roger, gazing steadily into the changeable eyes of the man with the warts.

The stranger stared at Roger, in his turn, and with a degree of surprise bordering upon amazement.

"Faith! yes, monsieur, you have guessed it."

"Ah! I knew it, indeed!" exclaimed Roger, triumphantly.

"Well, and what then?"

"It leads me to conclude that I shall lose my suit if I do not espouse her."

"And also to the certainty that you will win if you do espouse her."

"It is very sad," said Roger.

"Ah! monsieur," said the stranger, "you do wrong to complain; you are on the high road to fortune. Go ahead, chevalier, go ahead, — that is all I have to say."

"Yes, and I, a gentleman, against whose honor not a breath can be whispered, I shall have married the daughter of a man that sells justice."

"Oh! you look at the matter from a deplorable standing-point, Monsieur d'Anguilhem," replied the unknown; "your point of view is absurd, if you will permit me to say so! A man that has influence makes use of it; he serves his friends, and the law of gratitude, which in the

law of fine natures, being granted, his friends, in their turn, do him a service in exchange for his kind offices."

"Yes, I know, indeed; but the demoiselle?"

"Well, the demoiselle?"

"The demoiselle — is she a demoiselle?"

The stranger chuckled.

"Or a widow?" continued d'Anguilhem.

The stranger chuckled still more.

"The devil! monsieur," cried the chevalier in a rage, "I believe you are mocking me."

"God forbid, chevalier; but I laugh at your apprehensions."

"Which are groundless, perhaps," returned d'Anguilhem, "when I am required to buy a pig in a poke!"

"Your surprise will be the pleasanter, Monsieur d'Anguilhem."

"Ah! I know how to be satisfied as to that, monsieur. Only let me see the demoiselle — the young person — the person I am to marry — the lady in question, in short."

"Impossible, monsieur, impossible."

"But come, — the father, then, — let me see the father. That is not asking too much, eh?"

"On the contrary, monsieur, it is asking everything. Having seen the father, within twenty-four hours you will know who is the daughter."

"You will drive me mad!" exclaimed d'Anguilhem.

"Come, monsieur le chevalier," remonstrated the man with the warts, speaking in his most honeyed tones, "do not thus excite yourself. The transaction is an honest one, believe me, and you will repent having raised difficulties, for, in giving way to all these petty considerations, which, I see with regret, have a ridiculous importance in your estimation, you are in a fair way to lose a fortune of fifteen hundred thousand livres and a case that entails from

thirty to forty thousand livres of costs; while in marrying you are assured of your million and a half, plus furniture worth sixty thousand crowns, jewels and precious stones worth more than one hundred and fifty thousand livres, to say nothing of the money in the strong box, — and the box is heavy, I can answer for it; I was present when they put on the seals."

"*Ah, ça!* answer one question."

"Proceed, monsieur, proceed, and if I am at liberty to answer, I will do so."

"How does it happen," said Roger, "that my would-be father-in-law did not offer his daughter to Monsieur Afghano, my adversary?"

"Because he wished to give you the preference."

"I am greatly obliged to him!"

"Then, the Indian is ugly, and you are a handsome fellow; then, too, your adversary may be a very great lord in his own country, but here his nobility is not recognized; in short, the name of d'Anguilhem sounds better to French ears than the rather barbarous one of Afghano. Madame Afghano! you understand, — how could that be announced at court? However, if you refuse to-day — "

"Well, if I refuse to-day?"

"I shall go to Monsieur Afghano to-morrow."

"Why, the father is determined, then, to establish his daughter?"

"She is old enough to be settled."

"Ah! yes, I believe it. In short, I am chosen for the sacrifice."

"I repeat, monsieur, that you are wrong, and your words are those of a page. You are given fifteen hundred thousand livres; they are laid in your hand; for that purpose you are run to earth in the worst room of a

bad hotel, and you call yourself a sacrifice! Ah! really, you wear me out."

"Well, monsieur, let us come to terms," said d'Anguilhem. "Does the one who sent you wish a hundred, or two hundred, or three hundred thousand livres? I concede them, I offer them, I give them to him!"

"This proposition of yours is not common sense, chevalier. The hundred thousand crowns that you are offering are not yours to give; they form your wife's dower."

"What! my wife's dower?"

"Eh! yes. On marrying the young girl, you settle a hundred thousand crowns on her; that is very natural, it appears to me, when the father has made you the winner of fifteen hundred thousand livres."

"You said 'the young girl,' monsieur!" cried the chevalier; "ah! you said it; the demoiselle is young, then?"

"You lucky, lucky d'Anguilhem! accept, I advise you, accept!"

"Listen: you know me; I live in open daylight. There is no mystery about me, and I play with my cards on the table."

"Well, may you play a fine game to the end!"

"I ask nothing better; but I need some evidence of your credit, a proof of your influence."

"What?"

"Delay for eight days the judgment to be pronounced on the day after to-morrow, and in exchange for this assurance I will pledge you my word on two conditions."

"Which are —?"

"That the girl shall not be deformed, and shall not, or, rather, she shall —"

"I understand, chevalier."

"Well?"

"Agreed."

"To what? — you will guarantee — "

"Yes."

"In that case, you have my word."

"In ten days, then?"

"In ten days."

"I shall be here on the morning on which the decision is rendered."

"I shall expect you."

"Very well, chevalier, very well. Ah! you were born under a lucky star, Monsieur d'Anguilhem!"

And the man with the warts took his hat and backed out of the room, bowing more humbly than ever.

Five minutes later he returned in alarm.

"Monsieur," he cried, "perhaps you thought to save yourself by a bold stroke, and for that purpose stationed your friend, the Marquis de Crétté, in ambush in his carriage twenty steps from the door of the hotel; do not deny it. I recognized the livery and the coat of arms; but you are making a mistake, be assured of that. The delay accorded is a guaranty to us as well as to you. If, in the interval, anything of our projects should be noised abroad, if anything transpires of any nature whatever, if any sort of proceeding on your part gives us umbrage, I, the sole witness, — pray understand, the sole one, — will deny everything, and you will lose your suit in disgrace."

Roger was astounded at this new threat, which corresponded so well with his secret intentions; for, as we have said, he had conspired with the marquis to unravel the mystery and to visit upon his tormentors the annoyance which they had inflicted upon him.

However, on finding his plans discovered, he fell back, disheartened.

"What must be done, monsieur, that you may be satisfied?" he demanded of the unknown.

"Descend first, monsieur," replied the latter, "and when I have seen you depart with the marquis, I, too, will go away."

Roger put on his hat and obeyed with a crestfallen air, followed, a flight of stairs behind, by the mysterious man.

He found Cretté impatiently waiting in his carriage. He warned him that he was discovered, and they were together driven to the Luxembourg, where they conversed a long time.

Meanwhile, the man with the warts went his own mysterious way.

"There is nothing to do now," the marquis told the chevalier, "unless, very quietly, to set on foot some inquiries, in order to engage your mind somewhat, and by preparation to deaden the blow which cannot be avoided. After all, my dear chevalier, assume that the thing is done, and that you have made a bad match. On the other hand, you can easily console yourself on looking around and seeing by how many other queer households you are surrounded."

"Yes, but the wives have entered those households in the usual manner, while I — I am being hunted down in fine shape! Good Lord! what will all our friends say?"

"They will know nothing about it; you do not intend to speak of it, do you?"

"God forbid!"

"Well, it is not likely that your father-in-law will for his part boast of his novel invention for lighting Hymen's torch."

"Alas! have you not yourself more than once told me that everything is known in Paris?"

"Everything is known, or nearly so; but a thing can be concealed if one is bent upon it. Besides, a pistol is at your head, and you must escape either by the door or by the window, as they say. Recall your studies among the Jesuits of Amboise, and since you have taken a course in philosophy, why, my dear fellow, be a philosopher."

"Ah, marquis! that is a very easy thing for you to say. Come, be frank — would you make this marriage? Answer!"

"I, the Marquis de Cretté, possessing an income of sixty thousand livres, as I do, without counting my mother's property, — no, I confess, I would not marry this girl without seeing her; but if I were Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem, and I must, in case of refusal, die of hunger, I would marry Alecto herself, possibly separating from her afterwards, or, the opportunity offering, breaking a bed-post over her back."

"You are speaking sincerely?"

"On the word of a gentleman!"

"But, reflect, — I am in love."

"That is always folly; but, in your case, it is a misfortune."

"But think of it! I shall lose Constance!"

"Nonsense! Only mountains never meet, and some day you and Mademoiselle Constance will meet."

"She will lose faith in my loyalty."

"You will explain matters."

"She will curse me."

"Ah! in that case, the wrong will all be hers, and she will be unreasonable."

"She will not believe it possible that I could have resolved to be so unfaithful."

"You will say that your father was responsible,

and she will think it was Anguilhem's revenge on Beuzerie."

"But she too will marry."

"So much the better for you, my dear fellow! so much the better! In the first place, you will not have it on your conscience that you have caused her to remain single. Then, once she is married as well as you, others will forget your little romance. You will go into the country, you will hunt with her husband, you will invite him to dinner; while he is paying compliments to your wife, you will be talking over old times with his. However he speeds, you will always have the advantage of taking up the affair just where you left off.".

"Ah! if Madame de Maintenon were to hear you, my dear Cretté."

"She would think herself forty years younger, that is all."

The two friends arose to go and pursue their inquiries.

XV.

HOW THE JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN.

THE chevalier and the marquis spent the next three days in running about. Valets talked, concierges talked, the very clerks of the court themselves opened their mouths, so adroit were the ruses and ingenious the methods employed by the two friends in order to learn what they wished to know.

However, after all their inquiries, they found that twelve judges and sixty councillors had marriageable daughters, so that after all their research, Roger and the marquis were but little further along than when they started.

There were, moreover, certain of these damsels whom the chevalier held in dread, as they could by no means be regarded as prizes. One had been surprised at night in a half-ruined cloister back of the Rue Saint Benoît.

Another had made a journey into Picardy, without either her father or her mother, and there were very ugly rumors that her cousin, the musketeer, had brought her back.

A third, indeed, had been recognized, it was said, in a fiacre, at Marly, at one o'clock in the morning, leaving the notorious inn with the sign of The Golden Calf.

Nothing went to prove that the demoiselle he was to marry was one of these three; but there was nothing to prove that she was not one of them. As a result, Roger remained plunged in the deepest perplexity.

In the meantime, he learned that, in accordance with the desire that he had expressed to the mysterious man, the judgment was to be postponed eight days. It was to him a significant mark of his persecutors' good will toward him, as well as of their influence in connection with the courts of justice.

On the eighth day after he had written, that is, two days before a decision would be rendered, he received a letter from Anguilhem.

The baron had been sparing of neither ink nor paper, for the letter contained eight large pages. He announced to the chevalier that he would himself have come to Paris, had not lack of money detained him at his château. He deplored the fatal necessity that weighed upon his dear son, and he left him absolutely free to act according to the dictates of his understanding or of his heart; which seemed to Roger to be a touch of the most exquisite paternal delicacy, and which, amid a thousand sobs, caused him to adopt the cruel resolution of renouncing Constance to secure the happiness of his parents.

"Do not be influenced by consideration for us," wrote the baron in this model letter. "You are young, Roger, and you have long years to live; do not sadden your entire existence for the sake of easing the remainder of ours. This suit will have ruined us, your mother and me, — but, what matter! we are used to privations. Besides, you have strength, good will, powerful friends; you will obtain employment which will admit of your assisting us a little until our deaths, which now cannot be very far distant."

Roger went no further. He wiped his eyes, bowed his head with reverence, and when in due season the man with the warts arrived at his apartment, the chevalier said, —

"Monsieur, I am ready; what have you for me to sign?"

"This," said the emissary, drawing from his pocket, and displaying, a paper covered with writing.

"Very well," said Roger.

And he signed without reading.

"*Pardieu!* monsieur," said the man with the warts, "you are a straightforward gentleman, and however slow you are to decide, you at least act magnificently when you have made up your mind. That generous oversight will cost you nothing; read, however."

With terrible anguish, Roger read, trembling at every line lest he should encounter the name of one of the three redoubtable damsels; but he had the good fortune to see another name.

This paper was a document imposing the obligation to marry Mademoiselle Christine Sylvandire Bouteau, sole daughter of Maître Jean Amédée Bouteau, *conseiller-rapporteur* of the King's High Parliament, and containing an aknowledgment to the said Christine Sylvandire Bouteau, of a *dot* of one hundred thousand crowns, paid on the day on which the very noble and very honorable Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem won his suit-at-law against the Sieur Afghano, the stepson of the late Vicomte de Bouzenois.

Maître Jean Amédée Bouteau was that austere councillor who would receive neither Roger nor Afghano; the one that had no cat to which one could offer jewels, nor an ape on which one could bestow surreptitious donations, nor a parrot on which one could settle a life annuity. But he had a marriageable daughter.

"Is she very ugly, monsieur?" demanded Roger.

"I have orders to reply to none of your questions, Monsieur le Chevalier. Make your toilet, follow me to

the Palais, be present at the judgment to be rendered in two hours, and I shall have the honor to conduct you thereafter to the hôtel of Monsieur Bouteau, your father-in-law."

"For what purpose?" cried Roger, with an impulse of terror which interfered with his comprehending the incongruity of the question.

"Why, to return thanks, in the first place, for the possession from that moment of something like a million and a half more than you now have, and next to salute your affianced."

The chevalier's legs failed him.

"My father will be saved, and my mother will die in peace at Anguilhem," he murmured, falling into an arm-chair.

"Come, come," said the man with the warts, "I see indeed that you need to be alone in order to compose yourself; you shall go your own way to the Palais, and I will go mine."

And the man with the warts took his departure cavalierly enough, this time. Roger noticed the difference in his manner.

"It is to be expected," said he. "He is now sure of the matter. I have signed my own sentence."

And, as Maître Bouteau's envoy had suggested, he began his toilet.

Roger felt death in his heart. He detested in advance the woman he was going to see, and yet, by a prompting of the vanity inherent in the heart of man, he did not wish his first interview to give her a bad impression of his face and figure.

He donned a black velvet coat frogged with gold, and a white satin waistcoat whose seams were covered with rich embroidery. He then sent a messenger for the Mar-

quis de Cretté, who soon arrived in his most magnificent equipage.

Behind this carriage followed the coaches of d'Herbigny, Chastellux, and Clos-Renaud. Mademoiselle Poussette brought up the rear in a remise.

The marquis ascended to Roger's apartment alone.

As soon as he saw the marquis, the chevalier extended his arms, crying,—

"Alas! alas! alas!"

"The sacrifice, then, is made?"

"Made and executed," was Roger's response. "I have signed. Poor Constance!"

"And have you any new intelligence of your affianced?" hesitatingly inquired the marquis.

"Her name is Sylvandire."

"Ah! the devil! a charming name; that is already something. But that is only her baptismal name; what is her family name?"

"Bouteau."

"The daughter of our councillor!" cried the marquis.

"The same," said Roger. "Alas! it is some little monster that he has concealed from all eyes, and of whom he unburdens himself in my favor."

"Or in favor, rather, of your barony. I have occasionally met Maître Bouteau."

"And what sort of man is my father-in-law?"

"A Jew grafted on an Arab; enormously rich, besides, according to all accounts."

"And, in spite of his wealth," cried Roger, "he is driven to employing such means to establish his daughter! Ah! my friend, my friend, nothing but filial devotion —"

"True; Cleobis and Biton were not to be compared with us, chevalier, in my opinion; but we must not stay here lamenting, let us go to the Palais. If your wife is

too — queer, why, you can put her in one corner of the house with servants of her own, and a hundred thousand francs for her maintenance. You will suffer the affliction of her bearing your name, that is all; and with the other fourteen hundred thousand livres that remain, — well, you will find enjoyment elsewhere. You have read the contract carefully? There was nothing of your being forced — "

"No."

"Well, my dear fellow, you are to be pitied then! Come, come, we must be off."

And Cretté preceded d'Anguilhem, who went to the doors of their carriages to salute d'Herbigny, Clos-Renaud, Chastellux, and Mademoiselle Poussette, one after the other, and who then entered the coach of the marquis.

They reached the Palais; a crowd was assembled. The begum's son had decided to be present at the dénouement of this long drama. It was supposed that he must have dispensed nearly fifty thousand livres in making himself agreeable to the judges. He was so beaming of aspect that Roger lacked little of fainting, and Cretté became quite pale.

The judges were in the next room; they were in consultation.

At the end of an hour's deliberation the chamber was in session. Roger recognized his three judges, and trembled; behind them modestly came the *conseiller-rapporteur*.

"What is the name of the *conseiller-rapporteur?*" Roger timidly asked his neighbor.

"Maître Bouteau," answered the latter; "a very worthy man."

Roger endeavored to read the face of Maître Bouteau; but it was impossible.

The judges took their places with the grave aspect characteristic of those gentlemen, permitted the judicial regard, fixing upon nothing, to wander around the hall, and Maître Bouteau unfolded a paper.

"Courage!" said Cretté, leaning toward the chevalier's ear; "it is our father-in-law."

"I am aware of it," returned Roger.

Maître Bouteau coughed, spat, and read as follows: —

"*Whereas*, The Sieur Afghano, a native of India, has been unable to produce the document that he should have tendered the tribunal, and there exists no authentic proof of his right to the succession; and

"*Whereas*, The Sieur Baron Tancrède Palamède d'Anguilhem, represented by his son, Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem, is the next of kin to the deceased, and has presented documents in due form establishing that relationship, therefore

"*Be it ordered* by the court that the Sieur Baron Tancrède Palamède d'Anguilhem shall immediately enter into possession of the estate of the late Vicomte de Bouzenois, consisting of all properties real and personal and general possessed by the deceased, as is just, and that

"The Sieur Afghano, a native of India, is condemned to pay all charges without reserve or costs."

Maître Bouteau delivered the whole without once glancing at Roger, who could scarcely steady himself on his bench.

The marquis put his arm around his friend and whispered, —

"D'Anguilhem, your father-in-law is a grand man."

"Yes; but patience," said Roger. "The Indian is going to produce his document."

"He would not have waited until this time," returned Cretté. "Be easy; as he has not produced it, it is because he has none."

In fact, the Indian produced no document. He lowered his head an instant as if overcome by the blow; then, raising it immediately with a pompous air, in a voice loud enough to be heard not only by the judges but by the audience as well, he said,—

"Well, it was a good thing that my mother did not give everything to that wretched Bouzenois. Here is a proof of how dangerous it is to enrich lovers."

Roger felt his anger rising, and moved as if about incontinently to avenge the memory of a relative of whom he had just been recognized the heir.

"Are you mad?" cried Cretté, detaining him. "Let the wretch whine, then, that has just been flayed. Your name is not Bouzenois, but d'Anguilhem; and, *pardieu!* the lawyers have just said something very different."

At this moment, the Indian came toward the group of young people. Roger thought he was coming to him, and was ready to receive him; but the Indian passed near them, that was all. Only, in passing, he said loud enough to be heard, —

"You made a mistake, Mademoiselle Poussette, when you betrayed me. I still have an income of one hundred thousand livres."

"I congratulate you, monsieur," said Roger; "it is more than enough to support your name worthily."

"There, there, do not get into a quarrel," said Cretté; "let us go home and have a jolly supper."

"Alas! Cretté," replied d'Anguilhem, "you forget that I have to go and see my fiancée."

However, Roger pronounced these words in a tone less contrite than one might have expected from him. He was thinking of his father's pride, his mother's joy, on suddenly finding themselves so prodigiously rich. And

the poor chevalier was so good a son that he began to shake off the thoughts of Constance's grief.

And then one is quickly habituated to prosperity. Roger left the court-room with a springing gait and an inflation of chest that would have done credit to one who had been a millionaire from birth.

Cretté lent him his coach to go and pay his visit to Maître Bouteau, and he took leave of his friend, reminding him that the supper would be ready at eight o'clock.

Roger now discovered the man with the warts who was standing behind him. His opaline eyes glowed with fire.

"Maître Bouteau has just left the Palais to return to his home. Will not Monsieur le Baron go at once and present his compliments?"

"Certainly, my dear monsieur," responded the chevalier, "it is my most earnest desire."

"Well, are you satisfied, chevalier?"

"Yes, monsieur, you have kept your word, it is true; but there are yet two conditions to be fulfilled."

"And they shall be fulfilled, monsieur, as exactly — let us hope so, at least — as the first has been."

"Be so kind, then, as to get into my carriage, monsieur, and we will be off."

The man with the warts got into the coach; but notwithstanding Roger's insistence, he would sit only in front.

They reached a hôtel in the Rue Planche-Mibray; they ascended to the third floor.

Maître Bouteau was sitting in his office. He was a rather small man, with an immense brow, small eyes hidden behind spectacles, thick eyebrows sprinkled with gray, and an imperceptible mouth which was lost in the wrinkles of his cheeks; in a word, he was a very ugly

father-in-law, but it was not he that the chevalier was on the point of marrying. Roger bowed almost graciously, and was opening his mouth to express his gratitude.

"No thanks, monsieur," said Maître Bouteau, "you had an excellent case; besides, I have but followed the dictates of my conscience, and my colleagues, however prejudiced against you they may have been, allowed themselves to be persuaded by my feeble arguments in favor of justice."

A second time Roger bowed to Maître Bouteau; the latter did not appear to be examining him, but, while returning his salute, he eyed him narrowly over his spectacles. This scrutiny ended, he turned toward an embroidered screen which stretched behind him, and said with perfect naturalness, —

"My daughter, come hither and pay your respects to my client, Monsieur le Chevalier Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem."

Roger thought the earth was slipping from under his feet. A cold perspiration oozed from his forehead, his heart suspended its beating, and his eyes, staring and haggard, fixed their gaze upon an angle of the screen.

Suddenly, Roger beheld a delicious creature appearing.

Tall, of graceful figure, lithe, and agreeably proportioned, with black eyes veiled by velvety lashes, and long black hair that hung in heavy curls upon her white shoulders, — Sylvandire was eighteen years of age, at most, and would have passed as a miracle of beauty.

Roger, breathless, stupefied, petrified, did not think even to make a bow. He remained motionless, in ecstasy, his lips parted like the statue of Apollo about to speak.

"My child," continued the councillor as he took Sylvandire by the hand, "this is Monsieur le Chevalier

Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem who does us the honor of asking your hand in marriage."

Sylvandire raised her great black eyes to Roger, and cast upon him a look that penetrated the very depths of his heart.

"Oh, I am lost!" cried Roger to himself; "such a beautiful girl must already have been loved by some one, unless she has been kept in a closet."

"Will you permit Monsieur le Chevalier d'Anguilhem to prefer his suit?" continued the councillor.

Sylvandire glanced a second time at Roger with a mingling of astonishment, fear, and languorous passion; but she was silent.

"Silence gives consent, monsieur le chevalier," resumed Maître Bouteau. "Now, you shall know that Sylvandire is my only daughter, and that she brings her husband a dower of three hundred thousand livres."

Sylvandire pressed her father's hand as a sign of gratitude.

"*Pardieu!*" said Roger to himself, "he could give her six hundred thousand for all the money it costs him. No matter! I ought to thank him for being so modest."

"As to the wedding, when do you say, monsieur le chevalier?" asked Maître Bouteau.

"Why," said Roger, "it is for mademoiselle to fix the date, and when she will consent — "

Sylvandire bent her head, still without speaking.

"She is a mute!" cried Roger, believing that he had discovered the probable infirmity, and incapable of mastering the new fear by which he was just seized.

Sylvandire burst out laughing very frankly, and replied, —

"No, monsieur le chevalier; thank God, I can speak."

"Perhaps she is only foolish," thought the chevalier,

"and yet with such eyes it is impossible not to possess intellect."

However, as this first interview could only be embarrassing to all, the councillor gave his daughter a side glance, and she courtesied as if about to retire.

"What!" exclaimed Roger, "are you going away, mademoiselle, without deigning to say at what date you —"

"I leave you to my father, monsieur," answered Sylvandire. "Although he is a man of law, he does not like affairs to drag along. What he does is well done."

"Come," said Roger to himself, "I was deceived in that respect. She is not very stupid."

The fortunate chevalier went from one surprise to another.

Sylvandire withdrew, leaving Roger alone with his future father-in-law.

The marriage was set to take place in fifteen days.

The arrangements settled, Roger took leave of Maître Bouteau, and descended the stairs with a step lighter than that with which he had entered.

At the street-door he found the man with the warts.

"Well, monsieur," said the latter, "are you satisfied?"

"So well satisfied," replied Roger, "that if the last condition is as faithfully kept as the first two, you shall have a thousand louis, my fine fellow."

"That is just the same as if I had them in hand," said the unknown, bowing almost to the ground.

Roger heard this exclamation, and sprang into the coach without touching the steps.

"To the marquis!" he shouted to Basque with a voice in which lingered no trace of his recent fears.

Ten minutes later, the coach drew up in the court-yard of the hôtel.

XVI.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM PHILOSOPHICALLY RESIGNS HIMSELF TO A PRETTY WIFE, A MAGNIFICENT HÔTEL, AND AN INCOME OF SEVENTY-FIVE THOUSAND LIVRES.

THERE was a numerous company at the house of the marquis.

Roger entered with a beaming countenance. All approached and overwhelmed him with congratulations.

The marquis allowed this storm of felicitations to subside, and then he took Roger by the hand and drew him into a boudoir.

"Well," he said, "the fiancée?"

"Charming," responded Roger, with a rueful look.

"As pretty as Constance?"

"Alas! prettier."

"Why, then, what the devil are you still so gloomy about?"

"Ah! my friend," murmured Roger with a deep sigh, "I am perfectly sure that Constance —"

"Well, yes, I comprehend," said the marquis; "but what can you expect, my dear fellow! that also would be too much good luck, and you are getting unreasonably exacting. Consider yourself very fortunate to be let off with that, and then, besides, who knows? Everything that happens to you is so extraordinary!"

"Oh! no, my friend, you will not persuade me that there is not some serpent hidden among all these roses. But what of it, marquis! The die is cast, and be-

sides I have reflected that the most honorable man on earth might be deceived in my position. My wife's past is beyond me. Well, I shall content myself with watching her future."

"That is right; that is the way I like to see you! Now, let us go back. A bold face, and trust me to manage at the table, happy millionaire!"

They sat down to supper. The gold, the crystal, the candles, all were resplendent. At the sight Roger reflected that he, poor gentleman, two hours before, without fortune, could the next day, if he wished, receive in a handsomer hôtel and with a magnificence equal to that displayed in his honor, this friend which a timely thrust had made for him. Then, while thinking all this, he remembered the fencing-master, so kind and so disinterested at the time, who had, without knowing it, assured the fortune of his family by demonstrating a flanconade to his son.

"My dear friends," said the marquis, "you are aware that we have gathered this evening to rejoice over the winning of the famous suit which gives our friend an income of seventy-five thousand livres."

"You are the one that brought me luck," returned Roger with a bow to the marquis.

"Here 's to the health of d'Anguilhem and his seventy-five thousand livres!" then cried the guests together.

"But wait," said Cretté, "and you shall drink two healths at once, unless you prefer to drink twice."

"What is it then?" at once demanded d'Herbigny and Clos-Renaud.

"Our friend d'Anguilhem," said the marquis, "has suddenly fallen in love in Paris, and who can guess what dainty bit the rascal has chanced upon?"

"A maid of Saint Cyr, dowered by Madame de Maintenon?" ventured Chastellux.

"A princess palatine?" asked Clos-Renaud.

"A daughter of the royal blood?" demanded d'Herbigny.

"Ah! well, indeed! D'Anguilhem is noble enough already, and he is looking for money. The daughter of a lawyer, messieurs."

"Phew!" whistled some of the guests.

"Ah! chevalier, you are retrograding," said d'Herbigny. "You should marry an actress of the Comédie-Française or an opera-singer; that would be more like the grand seigneur."

"But stay, messieurs," resumed the marquis. "The damsel is as beautiful as Venus, and has a dower of six hundred thousand livres."

"*Peste!* chevalier, we congratulate you," cried the young men in chorus.

"Which means the chevalier settles in Paris, and establishes himself in the hôtel of the Vicomte de Bouzenois, and gives us banquets, — banquets beside which this one is only a grub-shop dinner."

"In that case, long live the chevalier and the chevalière!" cried d'Herbigny, raising his glass.

And all, in the same terms, did justice to d'Herbigny's toast.

"Now, said the viscount, replacing his glass on the table, "as you are on a good footing with the lawyers' guild, my dear d'Anguilhem, find for me, too, a daughter of one of your father-in-law's colleagues, some pretty little *robine*. I will take her even with five hundred thousand livres."

"Then, here 's to the future marriage of the Vicomte d'Herbigny," said the chevalier, lifting his glass.

Then while all were drinking he quickly turned to Cretté, and extending his hand, said, —

"Thanks, marquis, thanks! You have been kind, excellent, as always."

In fact, Cretté had saved his friend from all ridicule on the subject of his marriage. It is also true that Mademoiselle Bouteau's six hundred thousand livres had produced a magical effect.

In brief, the supper was so gay that, whatever his preoccupation, d'Anguilhem made merry even to the dessert.

Roger left the marquis two hours after midnight, making an appointment for the morning at eleven o'clock. He wished to take possession of the Hôtel de Bouzenois accompanied only by his friend.

At the appointed hour the marquis was at Roger's hotel. They set out together for the Place Louis-le-Grand, and this time the two doors of the grand entrance opened to the chevalier. For an hour the representatives of the court had been waiting to remove the seals.

All that the man with the warts had said was scrupulously true. The strong box was full; the caskets were gorged with jewels; the collection of engraved gems and of medals was magnificent.

Roger was dazzled at sight of such wealth. He, who had come to Paris with fifty louis, did not know that so much money existed in the world. He wished to repay on the spot the eight or ten thousand livres that he owed Cretté; but the marquis made him understand that he was in rather too great haste by saying that he would send Basque in the morning to take charge of all that hardware.

The chevalier at once selected some of the diamonds and precious stones to send to his mother. Perhaps,

while doing this, he was thinking of Constance; for, although he did not pronounce her name, Cretté understood by his involuntary sighs that he had not forgotten her.

The hôtel, although very sumptuous, needed to be overlooked by a man of taste. Again it was Cretté who undertook the task. He sent for his upholsterer, gave him his orders, and granted him eight days. The upholsterer declared that it was impossible to have everything done in so short a time. Cretté contented himself with replying, —

"You will be paid the day it is finished."

By the seventh day the hôtel was refitted and in order; and, in accordance with Roger's ambition, the arms of d'Anguilhem had replaced on the hatchment the arms of Bouzenois.

In the meantime Roger had sent his mother the best carriage he could find in the coach-houses. It was Rameau-d'or who conveyed it, travelling post. He had to return by the mail-coach. Cretté was Roger's never-failing resource. When he was not lending his advice, he was lending his money. When he was not lending his money, he was lending his servants.

As Rameau-d'or was a trustworthy man, he was notified that one of the coach-boxes, whose key was given him, contained a thousand louis, and was bidden to keep watch over it.

Roger wrote also to his father and mother to come and take possession of the rest of their fortune, sending them an account, even to the last sou, of all that he had been obliged to expend, adding, moreover, that by unheard-of good fortune his fiancée was beautiful and perfectly bred, and it seemed impossible that any one could be more spirituelle.

The joy of the baron and the baroness was extreme when they learned that their daughter-in-law seemed to be quite above reproach, and the baron declared that he would settle upon his son an income of fifty thousand livres, and keep the remainder to improve Anguilhem.

"Yet," he added, "perhaps we shall buy a town residence at Loches, in order to receive there during the winter."

The report of the winning of the suit and the marriage to follow was spread abroad as far as Beuzerie. The viscount and the viscountess, who, while consenting to their daughter's marriage with Roger, had always preserved a leaven of ill-feeling toward the d'Anguilhems, hastened to transmit the news to their daughter; but Constance shook her head, smiling, and would not believe a word that was told her.

"Has Roger written?" she asked.

"No."

"He told me to believe nothing but what I should hear from his own lips, or should see written by his own hand."

"Consequently —"

"I believe in nothing but his love."

The viscount and the viscountess insisted as long as they were able; but Constance, like the doubting apostle, would not believe without seeing.

Before his departure for Paris the baron felt constrained to pay a visit to his neighbors, and explain to them by what necessity Roger was forced to fail in his engagement. The viscount listened very tranquilly to his discourse from end to end, and then he bade his wife bring Constance down from her room. Constance descended, and Monsieur de Beuzerie begged that the baron would repeat to his daughter what he had just said

to him relating to Roger's marriage. The baron repeated word for word the little speech that he had framed as he came along the road; but during all the time he was speaking Constance kept shaking her head, with a smile that was full of adorable trust. Then when he had ended she asked, —

"Did Roger send you a letter for me?"

"No," answered the baron. "His position was too embarrassing. He would not have dared avow to you that he had been compelled, in spite of himself, to be unfaithful to you."

"In that case, you are trying to deceive me," replied Constance. "Roger told me to believe only what I heard from his own lips, or saw written by his own hand."

"Consequently," repeated Monsieur de Beuzerie.

"I believe in nothing but his love."

And they could get nothing further from the girl, who, moreover, appeared to take no sort of interest in the rumors which soon spread throughout the province.

The departure of the baron and the baroness, travelling post with four horses and a courier in advance, was an event to be talked of a week for ten leagues around. It was said that Roger had found chests filled with diamonds and a gold-mine in the cellar.

During this period Roger was wooing; but his fiancée was kept under the strictest guard. Maître Bouteau did not leave his daughter a moment, — a paternal assiduity that continued to nourish Roger's misgivings. Nevertheless, he went daily to pass an hour with Sylvandire, and the girl, to the great amazement of her future spouse, displayed a most varied culture and a most agreeable mind. Roger never ceased to look and to listen.

All the customary formalities, moreover, had been

observed, and only the arrival of the great relatives was awaited to proceed with the marriage ceremony.

That arrival was too stately a spectacle for us to neglect attempting to give some idea of it to the reader. Monsieur and Madame d'Anguilhem had spiritedly ordered their wardrobes from Paris. Hence they appeared dressed in the latest styles of the court, and as both were of ancient lineage and possessed the noble bearing that two revolutions have not yet been able to efface from our real nobility, they presented a suitably imposing appearance; but the nephews and cousins from the country, and the distant relatives from Saintonge and Périgord, produced a profound sensation. They came in the felt hats, doublets, breeches, and cloaks of the time of Louis XIII. One would have said that a collection of family portraits had emerged from the garret.

Roger, who dreaded ridicule above all things, was married at night at Saint Roche, thus postponing the wedding-feast until all the relatives, loaded with gifts, would have departed in the conveyances by which they had come. The baron and the baroness lavished caresses on the lawyer's daughter, who smiled affectionately at her husband and lent herself admirably to their endearments.

Roger thanked the Marquis de Cretté for all the services rendered him and the honor done him, and promised to write to him on the subject which had so tormented and which still tormented him more than ever. Then he set out with his wife for a little country-seat at Champigny, which had long been used as a place of residence by Monsieur de Bouzenois.

As for the baron and the baroness, they went back to Anguilhem, impatient to heighten by a little necessary

outlay the splendor of the escutcheon that was falling into reproachful decay above the gateway of the château.

The day following Roger's departure for Champigny the Marquis de Cretté received from the chevalier by special courier, a letter which contained only these few lines: —

"I am the most fortunate of men!

"Do me the favor, my dear marquis, to ask my father-in-law for the address of the man with the warts, and remit to him, in my name, one thousand louis.

"Your sincere friend,

"LE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM."

XVII.

HOW THE CHEVALIER FOUND HIMSELF IN SUCH LUCK THAT HE WAS READY, LIKE POLYCRATES, THE TYRANT OF SAMOS, TO CAST A RING INTO THE SEA.

Thus Roger had set his conscience at rest with regard to Mademoiselle de Beuzerie.

If nothing weakens love like possession, nothing nourishes it like hope; but hope once lost, the strongest love retires, if it is not destroyed, before stern necessity. Hence when Roger knew that he must no longer indulge in his old-time fancies, and found himself face to face with one of the most seductive realities that could exist in all the world, he wept and he moaned, but in the end he sacrificed himself, and with a very good grace even.

He took advantage, then, of his mother's return to Anguilhem to write Constance a most touching letter. He told her that one of the necessities that gentlemen sometimes encounter, and by which their courage is tried, had come upon him, and that, in sacrificing himself to the happiness of his family, he was about to renounce the hope of ever being happy himself. He then entreated Constance to forgive and to forget him. But he closed by swearing to his dear love that, in spite of the inexorable decree that he was forced to obey, — the style is that of Corneille, still much in vogue at that date, — he, Roger, should love Constance until death.

Constance, thus released from her promise, became free again, and could marry in turn.

When Roger was writing Constance the letter whose substance we have just given, he had not yet had occasion to write to the Marquis de Cretté the one whose contents we gave at the close of the preceding chapter. He was then yet distrustful of Sylvandire, and he thought that, deceived beforehand, in all probability by his wife, he would always have the best side of the conjugal scene if ever the two rivals should compare notes, and one of them should show the other the letter that she had received.

Roger had been deeply moved while inditing the mournful sentiments that we have set forth, and, with eyes still wet with tears, he took the letter containing them to the Baronne d'Anguilhem. She, good dame, still possessed of faith in the undying nature of love, even when crossed by insurmountable obstacles, hastened to refer the matter to her husband, the more especially because Roger had charged her to forward the letter to Mademoiselle de Beuzerie, and to see above all things that it was placed in her own hands.

Monsieur d'Anguilhem was extremely embarrassed by this overture. To fail in the fulfilment of his son's desire was, in his own estimation, to betray a trust, and it must be confessed that during the last four months Roger had so grown in the paternal opinion and esteem, owing to the way in which he had borne himself in the capital, that the baron respected his son almost as much as he loved him. On the other hand, to convey to Constance a letter filled, undoubtedly, with vows of undying love was, perhaps, to rekindle the embers that were very certain to die out if left alone. It was, perhaps, to foster culpable thoughts, to foment a revolution at the hearthstone of the Beuzeries.

For the baron had not sought to learn the contents of

the letter, and he would as soon have cast himself into the fire as to have done it, such was his delicacy in the matter. The baroness, for her part, could give him no information save that, knowing Roger's unalterable affection for Constance, the letter must contain dreadful lamentations against fate and cruel accusations against destiny. As a result, after the baron had considered and reconsidered the subject of Roger's letter in all its bearings, he prudently decided that it would be better not to remit the letter to Mademoiselle de Beuzerie; and in order that he might not reverse his decision, he double-locked the epistle in a cabinet.

The carrying out of this resolution was for some time a source of much torment to the Baron d'Anguilhem; but he gradually gained comfort from the thought that chance often makes use of accident to do a great deal of good in this world.

As a result, Mademoiselle de Beuzerie, not having received the letter which released her from her vows, would admit nothing of what was said to her about Roger's marriage, replying to the most positive assertions of her father and her mother, —

"They have made him believe that I am dead!"

During all this time, Roger, supposing that he had restored her freedom to Constance, was very much at peace, and, were we not afraid of giving our readers too bad an opinion of our hero, we would even add that he was very happy.

I do not think there could be a marriage, unless it united a tiger and a panther, that could not pretend to the enjoyment of peace for a fortnight after the wedding-day.

Moreover, aside from her beauty, which was perfect, and of which Roger was unusually appreciative, Syl-

vandire seemed an adorable combination of simplicity, grace, and virtue.

Her newly-made spouse had questioned and cross-questioned her. He had exhausted his wisdom and logic in an effort to involve her answers in contradiction, but on no subject had he been able to surprise her in an untruth; and so he unceasingly asked himself why Maître Bouteau had taken so many precautions, such care and pains to secure the settlement of a treasure so desirable.

"But what did you do at your father's, dear?" Roger once asked.

"Oh! it was very dull," responded Sylvandire.

"But did he never entertain?"

"Oh! certainly, old counsellors, old lawyers, old judges, — all men whose talk was very tiresome."

"They were all?"

"Oh! *mon Dieu*, yes, absolutely all."

Thereupon Roger, after having dreaded a deformity, an infirmity, and something worse, upon recovering from these three terrors concluded that his wife must be addicted to a secret vice.

"Perhaps she is a gourmand," he said to himself.

It was a vice of the day. See Saint Simon.

And he essayed to provoke her appetite by the help of the exquisite wines that Monsieur de Bouzenois had kept in his cellar for twenty years; but, after tasting the best Tokay and the most exquisite Constance, Sylvandire made a little grimace of disgust, and returned to her pure cold water, the only drink that she liked.

On one occasion, having taken a sip of Syracuse, a flush overspread her face, and she was uncomfortable from it during the remainder of the evening. She de-

clared that henceforth she would abstain from so much as wetting her lips with any sort of wine.

"My wife is not fond of the table," thought Roger. "Let us look for some other vice, for certainly she must have one."

"Ah! now I have it!" he said, one fine morning. "My wife is a gambler."

And that very evening he placed a rouleau of gold before her and handed her the cards; but Sylvandire understood no game, laughed like mad when she won, and made a face for the loss of a twelve-sous piece.

"My wife is not a gambler," said Roger, "it is true; but perhaps she is miserly."

Roger put his wife into her carriage, crammed her pockets with gold, and took her to the most fashionable milliners and dressmakers in Paris. Sylvandire spent three hundred louis on bonnets, laces, and gowns, and that without bargaining.

"The devil!" exclaimed Roger. "She must be extravagant, then."

However, when he one day intentionally offered her a slight reproach for having paid ten louis more for an English guimpe than it was worth, Sylvandire thanked him for the remonstrance, and begged that he would in the future himself regulate her expenditures.

"So much the worse! So much the worse!" thought Roger. "It must be something very serious."

Then Roger stood guard and watched to see if there might not come prowling about the conjugal mansion one of those creatures of both night and day called cousins, a dangerous species of which one can be rid only by slaying them on the spot.

But not a plume of a lover, as Mademoiselle Scudéry would have said, not a muzzle of a gallant, as Molière

would have said, showed itself in the neighborhood of Champigny.

"Most decidedly, I possess a treasure," Roger said to himself in affright; "and I was born, it must be admitted, under some lucky star as yet undiscovered by the modern astronomers."

It was true, however, or at least it seemed to be true.

To say that Sylvandire felt great love for her husband is a thing we dare not affirm. Perhaps Sylvandire loved nothing, and in the eyes of poor Roger, that absence of love was a virtue; but there is nothing like these apparently indifferent people for waking up, for suddenly taking fire. There is nothing like a sunset behind the clouds for producing hail, rain, and storm.

Maître Bouteau visited his children at Champigny. Roger, who adored his own parents, and wrote to them twice a week, thought Sylvandire very cold toward this kind father who had accomplished so much for her. He meditated for two or three days upon her indifference, and as he was in a mood to discover good reason for everything, he persuaded himself in the end that her love for himself had extinguished all other love. We see that Roger was already far advanced in the study of his rôle as husband. From a pessimist he had become an optimist.

Moreover, Roger paid a thousand and one attentions to Maître Bouteau, and Maître Bouteau reciprocated them. But the one had an object in view; the other had none. Roger determined to attain a certain footing with Maître Bouteau, and when he had reached the desired point, to sound him to the depths. After a hearty country dinner which had lasted until seven o'clock in the evening, Roger thought his opportunity had at last arrived.

"Come, Maître Bouteau," he said, as he drew his father-in-law into an embrasure of the window, "come, speak frankly, now that you no longer fear I shall escape you, and, I will also add, now that I no longer even wish to escape; tell me — for I must admit that, so far, I have not discovered for myself — what the fault was with Sylvandire. Of course you must have had your reasons for disposing of her in so strange a fashion."

"I shall be very glad to speak freely, my dear son-in-law. In the first place, you can see for yourself," said the good man whose tongue had been loosened by the muscatelle, "I made Sylvandire's *dot* by the business, — a hundred thousand crowns."

"I know the figure," remarked Roger.

"A sum that you will get back after I am gone, with interest. Then, again, I made sure that my daughter would not marry one of these provincial lordlings whose possessions consist of cloak and sword, nor one of these tradesmen who credit their debts and debit their credits, in a word, who are ruined unless a wife comes to the rescue."

"You knew, then, the amount of Monsieur de Bouzenois' fortune?"

"To the last franc, sou, and denier, my dear son-in-law. I had myself verified everything, computed everything, made every estimate."

"But there were certainly gentlemen of the court to be preferred to me."

"Without doubt; but they had no lawsuits that delivered them up to me, bound hand and foot. Then, too, fortunes of fifteen hundred thousand livres are rare, even at court. Besides, I had always said that I would dower my daughter from the first important case that came in my way. To take money as your judges have

done is to rob both justice and the suitor; but, on the other hand, to throw into the bargain and give that same suitor who is indebted to you for his fortune, a charming girl, is at once, I think so at least, to perform a duty and to render a service."

"Quite the same thing," thought Roger. "In fact, the idea is very reasonable, and in an extreme case one can believe it. And so," he added aloud, "and so, my very dear father-in-law, you were not the least in the world embarrassed with Sylvandire?"

"Oh! *mon Dieu*, not at all, unless it was that she found it pretty dull with me, and that, as she is of a very decided character — "

"Ah! my wife has a decided character?"

"Her little head is iron, my dear son-in-law. As I was saying, since she is of a very decided character, I trembled from one hour to another lest she should commit some mad act. She is a girl of broad intellect, and requires above all things to be constantly entertained."

"She likes pleasure, then?" demanded Roger.

"I know nothing about it, having never provided her with any. However, from what I am able to gather from her character, I should say that she would not dislike amusements."

"Father-in-law, you certainly believe that I wish to make Sylvandire happy, do you not?"

"You are doing all in your power toward that end."

"Well, let us hear now. If, with that end in view, I were to consult you about her tastes and her character, what advice would you give me?"

"I should say: have confidence in her — "

"Ah! indeed, so much the better," interrupted Roger.

"But wait, wait," continued the father-in-law. "I should say: have confidence in her, but watch her always."

"The devil!" ejaculated Roger, ill-pleased enough with the conclusion.

The next day Maître Bouteau set out for Paris, leaving his son-in-law quite preoccupied with their conversation of the night before.

In fact Roger was so happy that it was evident such happiness could not last. And indeed Roger's very happiness was torture.

A strange thing is the heart of man. We do not speak of a woman's, which we know only by sympathy.

A strange thing, we repeat, is the heart of man, and one knows not what to think of the indefinite assortment of loves it contains. Certainly Roger had loved Constance well. Roger loved her even to the extent that had he learned of her marriage he would have been in despair. Well, Roger also loved Sylvandire with a different love, it is true. He loved Constance as one loves a beautiful lily, admiring its purity, intoxicated with its perfume, cherishing it in a corner of the garden of one's heart, away from all eyes, far from all gaze. He loved Sylvandire as one loves a beautiful diamond, causing it to flash its fires at every light, wearing it in the sight of all, gaining the envy of the ambitious.

The love he had experienced for Constance was the purest glow of the soul. The love he felt for Sylvandire was a somewhat commoner blaze, which, kindled in the depths of the heart, gradually won upon all the senses. Roger could have spent his life in looking at Constance, and he would have been happy in looking at her. In his relations with Sylvandire he would have

died of love, like Narcissus, had he been compelled to limit himself merely to the sight of her.

And now that I have sketched Roger's two loves, it is for the women to say with which of the two they prefer to be loved.

But in very truth Roger cherished them both, the one in his soul, the other in his heart; and perhaps even he was so happy, and feared so much to alter his condition, only because the one completed the other.

XVIII.

HOW THE CONJUGAL HORIZON OF THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM GRADUALLY CLOUDED OVER.

A FEW more days were passed in perfect happiness. But, constantly tormented by the confidences made to him by his father-in-law with regard to Sylvandire, Roger resolved to make a proposition to his wife that would perhaps put to a test the calmness which seemed an affectation on her part, so profound it was.

And Roger was wrong, we must admit. To enjoy present blessings and trust in heaven for those to come is one of the first precepts of human wisdom. It is also one of the least practised. Question three-fourths of the men who have been unhappy, and they will confess that they searched for their first grief, as Diogenes searched for a man, with a lantern.

To be brief, one fine morning Roger lighted his lantern and went to find Sylvandire.

"My beautiful darling," he said to her, "I have some news to announce that will certainly delight you; for of course, as I am greatly pleased, you will be greatly pleased."

"Why, certainly," responded Sylvandire, lifting to Roger a slow glance which was not exempt from some anxiety.

"This happiness arises from our love, Sylvandire; and you, of course, like me, prefer seclusion in love."

Sylvandire remained silent.

"Now," continued Roger, "as just we two love each other," and Roger somewhat emphasized his words, "to be by ourselves, to be far from society — "

Sylvandire gave ear like a horse at the whistling of the lash.

"We will sell the Hôtel de Bouzenois and have the furniture stored. Then we will live, if you like, at Anguilhem, where Maître Bouteau will delight us by coming to spend his vacation."

"And why should we bury ourselves in the country?" demanded Sylvandire with some spirit.

"Why, to live with my family."

"Your family is not mine," replied Sylvandire; "and save for the month that he would come to stay with us, my father would spend the rest of the year in Paris."

"Yes, my dear, you are undoubtedly right. But, between ourselves it may be said, Sylvandire, I do not think you care the least in the world to live with Maître Bouteau."

"You deceive yourself. I dearly love my father; and besides, I have no intention of exiling myself in that way."

"Do you call residence with me exile? Oh! the word is not pleasant, Sylvandire."

"But, my dear," rejoined in a much milder tone the young wife, who in a first discussion dared not go too far, "are we not rich enough to live in Paris, and to live there magnificently even?"

"Certainly," answered Roger. "Yet I wished to learn if you cared more for Paris than for me. At the first trial, you have settled it, — thanks!"

"Oh! by no means; you are deceived," cried Sylvandire effusively, as soon as Roger had committed the

imprudence of letting her see that his proposition was only a jest. "By no means; I will live wherever you wish, my darling, and provided I am near you that is all I require."

She was quite sure, while speaking thus, of returning promptly to Paris.

"Yes," returned Roger. "But you prefer that we should go back to the capital and amuse ourselves a little this winter, do you not?"

"You are wrong, my dear, to think that. I have no preference for one place more than another, and I wish everything that you wish."

What return can be made to a woman so submissive, except to outstrip what one supposes to be her desire?

Roger therefore gave orders to make immediate preparation for their departure, and they returned to Paris.

Roger had few acquaintances besides his old friends, and Sylvandire had none at all; for the judges, the counsellors, and the lawyers that frequented Maître Bouteau's hôtel could not be termed acquaintances. They were therefore satisfied to write to Cretté, d'Herbigny, Clos-Renaud, and Chastellux that they had come back to Paris, and that they dined every day at two and received every evening at eight.

Madame d'Anguilhem did the honors of the Hôtel de Bouzenois marvellously well, and was, on the whole, accounted charming.

On the first evening the Marquis de Cretté drew Roger apart, and having led him into an alcove, he said, —

"My dear chevalier, as I do not wish to be debarred from your house — "

"What! debarred from my house!" interrupted Roger. "What do you mean?"

"My dear fellow, you are young," answered Cretté.

"Your heart is pure and your soul is innocent. Now learn one thing. While the wife's friends are almost always the husband's, the husband's friends are rarely the wife's."

"Why is that?"

"Why? It would take too long to tell you. Perhaps I shall write two or three volumes on the subject some day when I have learned how to spell. I wish to tell you now that, whatever may be said to you against me, you have my permission to believe it, save only if it comes to pass that you are told I am paying court to Madame d'Anguilhem. You know me, Roger. I give you my word as a gentleman that your wife shall always be as sacred to me as if she were my sister."

"And never shall you be treated in my house as other than a brother," replied Roger. "Never shall you be excluded from my house until it pleases you to exclude yourself. Perish wife and fortune sooner than friendship like ours!"

"Amen!" responded Cretté.

The marquis was, in fact, very assiduous in his attendance at the chevalier's. But he was so scrupulous as never to arrive alone, and to make his hours coincide with those of everybody else. Then, too, he almost always left at the same time as the group of friends whom he had brought. In a word, faithful to his promise, Cretté limited his attentions to the husband, causing Madame d'Anguilhem to begin by despising him as an indifferent person, and to end by hating him as an enemy.

However, in a short time, the Hôtel de Bouzenois, now the Hôtel d'Anguilhem, became the rendezvous of a goodly company. Sylvandire, beautiful and gracious, attracted gallants as honey draws flies. But Cretté,

firm at his post with d'Herbigny and Clos-Renaud, drove away the flies with his conquering airs and his jests, which were always applauded by Roger. And so six months sped away without Madame d'Anguilhem's having given any grounds for gossip, whatever inclination toward it she might at heart, perhaps, have had.

She would have liked, nevertheless, to go to Versailles, and had, with this object in view, turned all her batteries in the direction of religion. But the marquis and his friends were one and all outspoken against the Old Woman, as they called Madame de Maintenon, against the Jesuit, as they called Père Letellier, against the Antiquities, as they styled the courtiers, against the old Machine, as they styled Louis XIV.

In this, as in everything, Roger was ranged on the side of his friends. And when Sylvandire insisted upon receiving into her house a more Christian society, he gave her to understand that he did not intend to convert the hotel into a monastery, and that if the abbés appeared, he would offset the black cloth with musketeers of all colors.

As will be seen, there was a great distance between Roger of Paris and Roger of Amboise, between Sylvandire's husband and Constance's lover, between the freethinker in revolt against the cloth and the student resolved to turn Jesuit.

Sylvandire, who felt that she was not the stronger, was forced to yield.

About this time Maître Bouteau was soliciting the position of president. Roger spoke of his father-in-law's wishes to Cretté, and Cretté, with his habitually obliging spirit, threw himself into the campaign, his friends doing likewise. But, however earnest their solicitations, however skilful their plans, they saw

clearly that, depending only on their own forces, they would not succeed.

Some one then spoke to Maître Bouteau of a certain Marquis de Royancourt, a great gulper of masses, and one high in favor with the Maintenon. Maître Bouteau promptly recalled to mind that this same Marquis de Royancourt had, three or four years previously, been engaged in a lawsuit which he had won before the tribunal of which he was the *conseiller-rapporteur.*

Maître Bouteau proceeded to call on Monsieur de Royancourt, by whom he was very well received, and he reminded the marquis of the incident of the suit which the latter remembered perfectly.

Now, as Maître Bouteau thought the recommendation of a pretty woman could do his affair no harm, he requested Roger's permission to present Monsieur de Royancourt to him and his wife, — a presentation to which Roger, not being distrustful, offered no opposition.

The Marquis de Royancourt was therefore introduced to Roger, who made a thousand polite speeches, and to Sylvandire, who modestly cast down her eyes.

Roger showed Monsieur de Royancourt every courtesy, partly out of politeness, and partly because he preferred to stand well rather than ill with him. He was an all-powerful favorite admitted to the solemn suppers of Madame de Maintenon, and lording it over the antechamber of Père Letellier.

On the next day after this visit Maître Bouteau was appointed president.

It was quite natural that one should entertain with his best a man to whom one was under such obligations. Therefore, on his second visit, the marquis was still more fêted than at the first. As for Monsieur de Royancourt, he expressed to the Chevalier d'Anguilhem his

surprise that such a man as he, young, rich, and talented, should not solicit some place at court or in the army. He obligingly tendered his services. Roger, who at all times had possessed a certain fund of ambition deep in his heart, replied only with the most sincere thanks.

Thus far, — he avowed to Cretté who felt for the newcomer a degree of antipathy, — thus far, we say, the marquis had in his eyes appeared to be very kind and gracious.

But, as we have implied, there was a difference of opinion between the two friends. Cretté looked upon the Marquis de Royancourt with an unfavorable eye. He knew how tortuous were the paths of those courtiers with the sanctimonious ways, who had just established themselves as extinguishers upon all the brilliant pleasures that had marked the first two-thirds of the great king's reign. "Tartufe" would certainly not have been played in the period of Monsieur de Royancourt's influence.

As for Sylvandire, she begged her husband to accept the good offices of Madame de Maintenon's favorite.

"We shall be admitted at Versailles," she said. "Perhaps, even, we shall be assigned an apartment."

"What then?" replied Cretté. "Is it not much better to be one's own master, as Roger is, than to have to obey the peevish whims of an old king always in a bad humor, and whom nobody can amuse any longer, not even Madame de Maintenon? As to apartments, you have a dozen of them here, in every way more convenient, I promise you, than those at Versailles. Granted, however, that a regiment is given to d'Anguilhem. Why, by all the devils! although d'Anguilhem is as brave as Alexander or Hannibal or Cæsar, to me he does not seem to have the least vocation for war. I had a regiment once myself. Well, I sold out. I will

resume active service when Madame de Maintenon is no longer the minister of war."

"You, monsieur," sharply retorted Sylvandire, "are sated with pleasures and honors, and I can understand your speaking thus; but Monsieur d'Anguilhem and I are novices and are thirsty."

Cretté then turned upon his friend a questioning look, to which Roger replied by a sign in the negative. Vanquished, Sylvandire went to find her father and sent Maître Bouteau to the charge. Maître Bouteau urged forward Monsieur de Royancourt.

It happened that one day at a banquet, one Wednesday, I think, Monsieur de Royancourt, who fasted four times a week, affected to eat only fish, and reproached the chevalier politely but quite severely, nevertheless, for the small observance he gave to the commandments of the church.

Cretté and his friends anticipated a sharp retort on the part of d'Anguilhem to that importunate personage, but they waited for some time. At last Roger replied, but less sharply than the marquis' unseemly reproach merited.

"Come, come," said Cretté aside to his friend; "we are declining, and the Royancourt is in the ascendency. Look out, d'Anguilhem, look out, you are ruled."

In fact Monsieur de Royancourt became a daily guest at the hôtel. He arrived with a grand train, with magnificent horses and insolent valets. From him Sylvandire learned all the news of the great world in which she longed to appear, but which was closed to her, like one of those enchanted gardens of the "Arabian Nights," which are guarded by dragons.

The dragon that forbade her entrance into this garden was the Marquis de Cretté, and she hated him cordially.

Roger, too, began to see clearly through these manœuvres, and the new-comer tried his patience exceedingly.

"This Royancourt annoys me greatly," Roger said to his friend one morning. "He took my wife and my father-in-law yesterday to that Jesuit, Letellier. All this sermonizing suits me little."

"Well, go away from it all," said Cretté, who was on the most cordially familiar footing with him. "Take Sylvandire into Touraine, leave me with full power, and in your absence, never fear, I will clear the premises."

"*Parbleu!* that is an idea!" exclaimed Roger.

Thereupon, he made everything ready for their departure, but said not a word to any one, save that two hours before entering the carriage he notified Sylvandire that he should take her into the country.

Sylvandire was astounded at this bold stroke, of which she had deemed Roger incapable. Then she wished to discuss the subject, but Roger stood his ground. Then she wept, but Roger was insensible to her tears. Then the hour arrived, and she had to start without receiving the adieux of Maître Bouteau or those of Monsieur de Royancourt.

"Oh! this is monstrous!" exclaimed Sylvandire, as she entered her carriage.

"But," replied the chevalier as he took his place beside her, "but, my darling, since you are happy wherever I am, as you have assured me, of what do you complain? Let me hear."

"Monsieur, you might at least have warned me in time to take leave of my father and my friends."

"Impossible, my angel. The idea of going occurred to me just when I communicated it to you."

"Are we to stay long on your estates? I warn you beforehand that I hate the province."

"But nothing compels us to stay there eternally. We shall stay as long as we are both pleased."

And just then the postilion cracked his whip, and the carriage dashed off at full speed.

At the fourth relay they stopped for supper. Sylvandire requested that she might send news of themselves to her father, to which Roger was not at all opposed.

Sylvandire then wrote a letter, whose contents Roger's delicacy would not permit him to seek to learn. However, that letter finished, she continued to write others, which proceeding gave rise to some suspicions. But what Roger dreaded above all things was a first scene that should be at all serious; for he knew that the conjugal sea, once troubled, would never again become perfectly calm.

Nor was he willing, moreover, to question the maid who posted the letters. It seemed to him an indignity to communicate suspicions of such a nature. Then, too, perhaps he reckoned that, lucky so far, his star would always remain bright.

At Chartres, Sylvandire asked him to stay a few hours that she might pray in the cathedral.

Since Sylvandire had, as we have said, affected great piety, from the time of Monsieur de Royancourt's appearance at their house, her request did not surprise Roger. Yet, as he did not know what to do with himself during those three or four hours, he informed Sylvandire that he would take a horse and visit d'Herbigny, who had a country-seat in the neighborhood. Sylvandire took her way toward the cathedral, and Roger set out for the viscount's. Roger remained there three hours; but as he was less intimate with d'Herbigny than with Cretté, he said to him only that he and his wife were taking a pleasure-trip to Touraine.

On going back to the inn, Roger learned that Sylvandire had not returned. He waited about an hour. Then, as she did not return, he walked as far as the cathedral. Sylvandire was not at the cathedral any more than she was at the inn. He therefore went back to the Golden Cross, called for the host, and asked for information. He then learned that Sylvandire had gone off in her post-chaise with her maid. This was a cruel blow, yet he preserved entire presence of mind, and said to the landlord, —

"Nothing was wanting, was there?"

"No, monsieur," replied the host; "and madame appeared to be quite satisfied."

"That is well," returned Roger, and he ascended the stairs with wrath in his heart.

He entered the room that his wife had occupied, and found on the toilet-table, still in disorder, a letter from Sylvandire, on which his address was traced in small characters, very firm and very bold.

This is what the letter contained: —

"MONSIEUR, — You thought proper to take me from home upon two hours' notice. I, who am a woman, and under this title lay claim to a few more privileges than you, am returning to Paris, and I notify you two hours afterwards.

"SYLVANDIRE.

"Continue your journey or come back. Do not inconvenience yourself. You know I have my father and my house in Paris."

"She has outwitted me," said Roger, "but she shall pay for it. Ah! Cretté, you were quite right. I am no longer master; but let us wait a little, and we shall see."

XIX.

HOW THE CONJUGAL HORIZON OF THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM GREW SUDDENLY TEMPESTUOUS.

As we have said, it was a cruel blow, and the more cruel in that it struck a man still on the threshold of life, still in the dawn of illusion, one whose heart had already suffered much, and the happiness of which had been too brief for it to be surfeited.

Roger, therefore, felt at once all the transports of rage, shame, and jealousy.

He ordered Breton, his valet, to procure three post-horses, and as soon as the horses were at the door of the inn, he leaped upon one, and Breton sprang upon another. The postilion bestrode the third, and all three were off at full gallop.

Motion is one of the irresistible necessities of tortured souls. The gallop of a horse that is carrying us toward certainty, a greater misfortune, perhaps, but sometimes also toward revenge, is a species of physical balm poured upon the wounds of the soul. The road vanishes behind us; the trees flee. One feels that one is advancing, nearing, arriving. A thousand feverish visions pass before the eyes. A thousand plans, each more senseless than the other, spring up in the heated brain only to be overthrown. The madder the horse's pace the more he is urged; and a demon shrieks in your ear, "Faster! faster! faster!"

Roger made the journey in five hours without resting a moment save to change horses; and yet he did not overtake Sylvandire. Breton was bruised to a pulp, but he himself was unconscious even of fatigue.

When Roger turned into the court of his hôtel, Sylvandire had been at home an hour and a half. Roger entered the salon, booted and dusty, with riding-whip in hand. Sylvandire was already arrayed in evening dress, and was gracefully leaning on her elbow on a sofa. She was conversing with Monsieur de Royancourt and three or four of his friends whom he had introduced at the Hôtel d'Anguilhem.

Such audacity astounded Roger. He felt his legs failing under him. He leaned against the door. He was as pale as death.

"It is Monsieur de la Fontaine's fable over again," murmured Roger. "'*La Lice et sa compagne.*' There are four of them. Well, I will get Cretté and two friends. Then we will take a turn behind the Convent de Saint Sacrement."

However, on Roger's arrival, all rose and pressed around him, displaying so much politeness in behalf of the new-comer that none but a rustic would not have waited for a different occasion to exhibit his anger.

Besides Roger instinctively felt that sooner or later the opportunity would come.

As for Sylvandire, she contented herself with making him a sign with her hand. Then with a little gesture full of pouting coquetry, she cried, —

"What! you could appear in such disorder — ah! bad husband that you are! I certainly think I deserve that a suitable toilet should be made by one entering my salon. Will you not go and dress, my dear?"

Roger stood aghast at her self-possession. He was

seized by a strong desire to clear the house on the instant with the whip that he held in his hand; but the dread of scandal restrained him.

"You are right, madame," he responded. "But, as you knew that I was about to return, I had hoped to find you somewhat more retired."

And he stared steadily at Monsieur de Royancourt for the purpose of causing him to feel that the admonition was aimed especially at him.

Like well-bred people, Monsieur de Royancourt's three friends understood that they must raise the siege. They, therefore, incontinently withdrew. As to Monsieur de Royancourt, he lingered behind them a few moments. Then, rising in turn, he saluted Sylvandire and Roger, and effected his retreat, having delayed it, undoubtedly, only by way of silent protest against the husband's manifesto.

"What, monsieur!" exclaimed Sylvandire as soon as Monsieur de Royancourt had withdrawn, "do you thus drive people from my house?"

"What do you call *your* house, madame?" retorted Roger. "My first impression is that it would sound as well to speak of *our* house."

"Ours, yours, or mine, no matter which, I shall not discuss words with you; but, once for all, I intend to receive here whom I like."

"And I — intend to drive away from here whom I dislike."

"You are a very — "

"Well, speak out."

"A very provincial gentleman."

"And you are a sharp little limb of the law."

"Monsieur! Do you think to frighten me?"

"Frighten or not, you are going to set out with me at

once for Anguilhem. This second time, however, you will not return so quickly as you did the first time."

"You speak in this manner because you think me alone and helpless," said Sylvandire, throwing off all restraint. "But I warn you that you deceive yourself, and, upon my word, you will find that there are those who will make you repent of your behavior toward me."

"Ah! your Marquis de Royancourt!" cried Roger with exasperation. "Ah! you mean that Marquis de Royancourt of yours, do you not, madame? Well, in one hour from now, your Marquis de Royancourt shall hear from me, and, *pardieu!* if, as I judged but just now, he understands neither my looks nor words, he will, I hope, understand actions at least."

Sylvandire knew of d'Anguilhem's affair with the Kollinskis, which had made some noise in society. Besides, she had often heard of her husband's courage and skill from Cretté and d'Herbigny. She was, therefore, very much afraid of what might happen, and, darting after Roger, she stopped him as he was setting foot on the stairs to ascend to his own room for the purpose of changing his attire; for Roger was one of the men who perfectly comprehend that when honoring his enemy with a proposal to cut his throat, the proposition must be made in velvet coat and lace ruffles.

But Sylvandire did not desire a scandal, as she had grand schemes based on Monsieur de Royancourt.

She clung, then, to Roger's arm, as we have said, and sought by her tears to soften his wrath. It was the first time that Roger had seen Sylvandire weep. His heart was not iron; and so, in this struggle, when he should have won at least the field of battle, he lost all. That very evening, Monsieur de Royancourt played a game

of backgammon in the salon with Maître Bouteau, and Sylvandire was smiling.

On the same evening, Cretté, having learned of his friend's return, presented himself at the Hôtel d'Anguilhem; but Sylvandire's orders had been issued, and he was told that, while monsieur and madame had indeed returned, they were not receiving.

On the morrow the marquis wrote to Roger that he should never again set foot in his house, since its door had been closed to him at an hour when he had seen in the court, at the very foot of the steps, the coach of Monsieur de Royancourt.

He added that their friendship was ended forever.

In despair, Roger hastened to Cretté's; but he found him deeply wounded.

Roger had no difficulty in persuading him that he had nothing to do with the orders given on the evening before. Sylvandire had assured him that there had been a misunderstanding, and he was absolutely determined to convince his friend on this point; but Cretté yielded with difficulty and upon one condition.

"Listen, chevalier," said the marquis. "That refusal was an insult, an insult given by your people, and, consequently, in the eyes of everybody, proceeding from you. Reparation must be made, therefore. Some day when my carriage is at your door, Monsieur de Royancourt must receive the same answer that was given to me. On this condition, I will overlook what has happened and say no more about it."

Roger promised the marquis that it should be as he wished.

He then went home and informed his wife of the agreement that he had just made with his friend.

Sylvandire began to laugh.

But Roger was by no means in a mood for jesting, and he insisted very seriously, and pronounced, for the first time, the terrible words that a wife never forgets and a husband always repents,—

"It is my will."

Then there was a dreadful quarrel. Sylvandire showed that she was really a veritable despot, and there followed between the two a long succession of "I insist!" and "I will not!"

"Well, if you will not," at last said Roger, who thought to triumph by means of one of those speeches so terrible to a good woman, "well, if you will not, I shall think, madame, that you entertain very peculiar sentiments toward Monsieur de Royancourt."

"Think whatever you are pleased to think," returned Sylvandire.

"If Monsieur de Royancourt does not leave my house," said Roger, "then I shall leave it; but, take heed; madame, I shall not enter it again."

"As you please, monsieur. The world is wide, you are young, and travel will improve you."

"Reflect, madame, I leave this moment."

"Go, monsieur, I am not keeping you," was Sylvandire's response.

Roger had taken a false step, and he perceived it, but it was too late. Instead of discussing the subject with his wife, he should have given orders at his door, and all would have been said. He had broached polemics, and the demon of feminine skill had got the better of his simple wrath.

"Well, are you still there?" asked Sylvandire, seeing that he had stopped, stupefied at such audacity.

Roger took three steps toward that shameless woman; but a sense of his own dignity checked him.

"Breton," he said to his valet de chambre, "have my trunks and my carriage ready in an hour."

Then he left the salon without Sylvandire's taking a step or saying a word to detain him, and he ascended to his room.

The hour sped quickly. It was certainly the most agitated and the most sorrowful hour of Roger's life. At the slightest sound he trembled and listened, thinking to see his wife enter, with repentance in her heart, entreaty on her lips, and tears in her eyes. He would have given ten years of his life that Sylvandire might have taken such a course. But, on the other hand, he would have given up all his life rather than make a single advance toward her. His sole virtue in such a case was obstinacy. It is much to have a strong head when one has a weak heart.

The hour was spent amid such anguish and heart-beating as cannot be described, and Roger took his hat and descended to the salon.

Sylvandire sat alone at her tambour embroidery.

"And so the thing is decided," she said, as indifferently as if she were speaking of a promenade in the Bois de Satory, "you are leaving us?"

"Yes, madame," replied Roger, amazed at her coolness; "and I have the honor to wish you good-day."

"When shall we see you again?"

"I shall have the honor to apprise you hereafter."

"Adieu, chevalier."

"Adieu, madame."

And, refusing the hand extended to him by Sylvandire, Roger precipitately rushed down the flight of steps, sprang into his carriage, and shouted, —

"Drive to the Hôtel de Cretté."

At that name he had the satisfaction of hearing Syl-

vandire angrily shut the salon window which had remained half open, and behind which she was watching to see what happened.

Cretté sincerely pitied his friend.

Roger wished to go and seek Monsieur de Royancourt, to provoke him to a duel, but Cretté restrained him.

"My dear fellow," he said, "you are in a false position. You have only yourself to complain of. You have brought it about. You must be patient. Watch your wife and the marquis, get possession of proof, and then, supported by your evidence, send a challenge to Monsieur de Royancourt. But you have seen nothing; you know nothing. Yesterday, moreover, you received the man in your own house. Has anything new happened since then? Have you anything to reproach him with since yesterday? No; he has not even entered your house. Monsieur de Royancourt will tell you that he does not know what you are talking about; that you are a visionary; and everybody will blame you, I first of all."

"What is your advice, then?"

"Why, bless you! go away, since you have announced that you are going on a journey. Go to Italy, Germany, England. Take a dancer, take anything, in fact, that will distract you."

"I detest women!"

"Well, yes, that is understood, of course; but there is nothing to console a love like a fancy. Why, no longer than eight days ago, if it had not been for little Poussette, I should have blown out my brains or turned Trappist. Try it."

"No, I am going away. I shall leave Paris. I shall go mad if I stay here."

"Why do you not pay a visit to Anguilhem?"

"And what excuse could I give for my wife's absence?"

"Pooh! Mademoiselle Constance will not ask you for one."

"Constance has forgotten me, and she has done well. Constance is married, without doubt. Ah! Constance, Constance, what a difference between you and Sylvandire!"

"Ah! my friend, you are quite right. Nothing less resembles one woman than another woman. Well, go to England. You will get some pretty ideas on the way to reduce the sex to obedience. Our neighbors across the channel are extremely knowing on the subject."

"Faith, I have a great mind to follow your advice."

Cretté embraced his friend, and made no effort to comfort him. He knew perfectly well that, for such hurts, time is the only balm.

Roger went to England. He stayed there three months, and he saw two Englishmen that were unfortunate in their marriages, who led their wives to market with ropes around their necks.

One sold his wife for ten guineas, and the other for seven.

"*Pardieu!*" exclaimed Roger. "I would give mine away for nothing, for my part! I would even pay something to boot."

Unfortunately Roger was not an Englishman.

At the end of three months he was seized with a longing to return to France. As he was perfectly free and nothing hindered his doing as he pleased, he immediately set out for Dover and embarked.

Twelve hours later he landed at Calais, having suffered greatly at sea, which had been of the roughest. As

soon as he had set foot on the wharf, he was met by Cretté's valet, who was himself waiting to embark. Roger recognized him.

"What! you here, Basque?" he said. "What the devil are you doing here?"

"Ah! *mon Dieu*, monsieur le chevalier," returned Basque. "It was the will of heaven that I should meet you here. I was going in search of you."

"For what purpose?"

"To carry you a letter from my master. But speak softly, if you please, monsieur le chevalier, for I fear some one is listening to us."

"And who should listen, pray?"

"Everybody, monsieur, everybody. You do not know, then, what has happened over here?"

"Whereabouts over here?"

"In Paris."

"It is three months since I have had news."

"Well, my master was questioned day before yesterday and threatened with the Bastile."

"What is that? Cretté threatened with the Bastile?"

"Yes, monsieur le chevalier, it is true."

"And why the Bastile?"

"Because he challenged Monsieur de Royancourt, who would not fight."

"And you say that you have a letter for me?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Which gives the details?"

"Probably."

"Then deliver the letter."

"Ah, *dame!* monsieur, it is not an easy thing to do, seeing that it is sewed into the lining of my vest; but if monsieur will go with me to the Hôtel du Dauphin —"

"But why all these precautions?"

"Monsieur will presently be informed, without doubt, on reading my master's letter. When monsieur le marquis saw the police officers enter his hotel, he suspected something, and he at once wrote this letter to monsieur le chevalier, ordering me to conceal it carefully, and then he said, 'Go, little Basque, and do not rest until you have found the Chevalier d'Anguilhem.' I started immediately, and here I am."

"Then let us go to the Dauphin, my friend, without further delay, for I am in great haste to read that letter."

They moved off at once with long strides, and, on reaching the hotel, they ascended to a room and locked themselves in.

"It is disrespectful to monsieur to remove my jacket in his presence," said Basque, "but I cannot avoid it."

"Go on, and be quick about it, my lad."

Basque ripped the lining of his jacket and drew forth a letter which he handed to Roger.

Roger eagerly opened it, and read as follows: —

"MY DEAR CHEVALIER, — This is the fourth letter that I have written to you; the three others have undoubtedly been intercepted. Your wife has disappeared, and in spite of every effort I have been unable to discover her whereabouts. Yesterday morning, I met Monsieur de Royancourt on the Cours-la-Reine, and, as I had no doubt that he was concerned in Sylvandire's disappearance, I told him outright that he was a miscreant. Thereupon, supposing that he would answer me as a gentleman should, I drew my sword; but I was deceived. To my great astonishment, Monsieur de Royancourt appeared not to have heard me. At the same time, I saw some officers of police approaching, and d'Herbigny carried me off. Last evening I sent Clos-Renaud and Chastellux to him to make an appointment;

they were not received, however. This morning they have come to arrest me, it is likely. I am despatching Basque to you; if he is so lucky as to find you, don't lose a moment, but hasten back to Paris and clear all this up."

"Oh! yes," cried Roger. "Yes, I will start for Paris."

And he summoned a post-horse at once, with the fixed determination, since his wife's imprudence gave him just grounds, of slaying Monsieur de Royancourt and all his friends whom he might encounter, were there a hundred, a thousand of them; and, as one may readily believe, the speed of his journey only heated his blood. But, arrived at the Cours-la-Reine, as the chevalier was about to enter Paris, an officer stopped his chaise while he bowed almost to the ground. Roger's first desire was to run the man through and through with his sword, and inaugurate with him the butchery that he meditated; but the officer took three steps backward, and, producing a document from his pocket, said, —

"By the order of the king, Chevalier d'Anguilhem, you are commanded to deliver up your sword."

An hour later the chevalier was registered at For-l'Évêque.

XX.

FINDING THAT PERMISSION TO LEAVE IS NOT GRANTED HIM, THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM RESOLVES TO LEAVE WITHOUT PERMISSION.

A MAN struck by a thunder-bolt does not burst into tears and lamentations; on the contrary, he remains motionless, senseless, breathless, bewildered; but, under the apparent apathy, nature acts, the connection between senses and organs, for a moment broken off, is re-established in his being, and feeling returns when he has regained strength enough to realize his condition and to endure it.

Roger, therefore, entered For-l'Évêque like one struck by a thunder-bolt. He had not notified Basque of his determination; he had, on the contrary, advised him to lie down, advice which Basque had gratefully taken, and while the poor devil was sleeping with clinched fists, Roger had leaped upon the post-horse and started at full speed for Paris.

He had not been willing to have Basque follow him, in the first place, because the poor fellow was worn out, and next, for fear of compromising Cretté. Moreover, he had at once burned the letter that he had received from the marquis, in order that none could accuse the marquis of being concerned in his action. All that Basque had told kept running in his head, and he had no suspicion that all the spies of Maître Voyer d'Argenson were at his heels.

When within ten leagues of Paris he took a carriage; he had made fifty leagues in fifteen hours, and he was bruised to a jelly. In the carriage he began to regain his spirits, for he still divined nothing. The officer took it upon himself to give him a clue to the enigma in the shape of his arrest.

And Roger was astounded, as we have said.

"Ah! I am arrested," he kept repeating to himself along the road. "Ah! I am arrested."

And, at each exclamation, the officer bowed with great courtesy, but made no reply.

The carriage turned into the court-yard of the château. Roger descended. A man in a coat of orange-colored velvet, with gold buttons, came forward, and indicated aloud to an officer the room assigned to Monsieur d'Anguilhem; he then read over in a muttering way the official report of the arrest, which had been scrawled in the carriage on the road by one of the officers, without the prisoner's having even noticed it.

Then he spoke, —

"Very well."

And he made a sign that the Chevalier d'Anguilhem should be conducted to the room designated.

Roger followed his guide, without speech, without sign of protest.

At that moment they might have shown Roger a scaffold covered with black cloth, with its block and ax; they might have made him a sign to kneel at the block and bow his head to receive the fatal blow, and he would have obeyed without the slightest hesitation. All the adventures which were following so closely upon each other seemed to have such intimate relations that he submitted to their results without knowing the reason; but he kept on, he went mechanically, bending his head

and accepting his absurd destiny, as in a dream one performs without hesitation and without astonishment the most monstrous follies.

This is why he passed almost unconsciously, almost without seeing, from a gloomy staircase into a very handsome gallery; then, from the gallery he took a winding stairway, went up an infinite number of flights, passed along another corridor, from the corridor into a sort of lumber-room and thence into a small apartment, dark but quite neat. The door closed behind him, the bolts grated, and Roger was aroused by the sound.

He found himself sitting on a sort of stool; he shook his head, looked around him, arose and went the length of his room, which was not far.

Then, moved by an instinct stronger than all others, he came to a standstill before a narrow, double-grated window through whose crossed bars a little light and air were permitted to infiltrate.

Light! air! life!

This poor Roger, this poor country gentleman, accustomed to take into his great lungs such quantities of the vital fluid, while hunting the woods and fields of Anguilhem, was reduced to struggle for breath and a ray of light at a chink in a wall!

We say to struggle, because the window was so narrow that a man could not put out his head. It was hewn with four sharp edges out of stones of enormous size, and two sets of bars at a distance of a foot apart crossed each other, as we have said, in the depths of the wall; then, at the outer aperture of the window, the prisoner could get a glimpse of a strip of sky against which nothing was outlined, not even a tree, not even a weathervane.

On fine days, Roger watched there for a cloud; on rainy days he watched for a bit of azure.

The situation was sad, and it was all the sadder that Roger had often pondered over the misfortunes that might happen to him, to the end that he might be prepared for them, but never had he dreamed of imprisonment; hence he was not at all prepared for it.

He sat down on his stool to reflect, then he looked at the worm-eaten table over which had been thrown a piece of tapestry, then he got up and proceeded to try his bed, which was very hard; and then, at last, he went back and sat down on his stool where he gave himself up to the strangest reveries.

That he was in prison was incontestable; but who had caused him to be cast into prison, and for what reason was he imprisoned? This was the problem to be solved.

No one can tell whither will wander the thoughts of a man who has nothing to do but to think; Roger's overran the whole earth, and every possibility. His first and foremost belief was that he must be the victim of an error.

"Perhaps," he thought, "my father has formed a conspiracy in the province, and I am supposed to be his agent."

Although Monsieur le Baron d'Anguilhem had been infinitely less displeased with the government of Louis XIV. since he became the heir of Monsieur de Bouzenois, his son, who had often heard him launch forth into complaints against Madame de Maintenon and Père Letellier, could indulge in such a supposition without great absurdity. And, for the moment, this idea was almost satisfactory to Roger.

"I shall prove," he thought, "that I have been in England for three months, that I have come directly from there, that it is eighteen months since I was last at Anguilhem, and that I have not seen my father for a

year. In the light of such evidence, my innocence will be apparent, and I shall be released in triumph."

And Roger was quite tranquil for the space of half an hour.

"Ah! yes," he began at the end of the half-hour, "but what if they think I have been in England to act in concert with the Prince of Orange, who has sworn eternal enmity to Louis XIV.? What if they think my journey to England was taken for the purpose of fomenting rebellions! In that case, I am lost!"

And Roger sat plunged in despair for another half hour.

"But still," he said to himself at the end of this half hour, "may not my affair have some connection with Cretté's?"

In fact, he could not think it was because of his affair with Monsieur de Royancourt that Cretté had been arrested, or rather, that it was solely because of that affair.

"Cretté," he told himself, "has the reputation of being an enemy of the Old Woman, as he is, in fact, and he has incurred her dislike. This Royancourt must execrate him. The king is severe with respect to duelling; perhaps he shut his eyes on our first affair with the Kollinskis, and spared our heads that time only for want of proof. To-day, on Cretté's simple challenge they base a second offence. Yes, but for my part, I am quite innocent of that, as I was in London when the marquis challenged Monsieur de Royancourt in Paris."

He then fell to thinking of his wife.

"She has disappeared," he said; "can it be possible that they think I have murdered her?"

And, at this thought, his mind dwelt no longer on anything but his wife's strange conduct toward him; and

then he fell into an access of rage, for Roger, as the reader must have perceived, was as jealous as a tiger, and it must be admitted that Sylvandire had given him some occasion for jealousy.

The hour for exercise had arrived; they came to fetch Roger.

For two hours daily the prisoners were allowed a promenade.

The promenade took place on the platform.

Roger found eight prisoners on the platform, eight companions of misfortune, all of greatly differing equipment and countenance.

One could almost read from their faces and habiliments the dates of their incarceration.

"What is the news in Paris, monsieur?" cried all the eight voices together.

"Faith, gentlemen," answered the Chevalier d'Anguilhem, "the news of my arrest; however, as the event happened five or six hours ago, perhaps they no longer speak of it now, and are beginning to occupy themselves with something else."

"Ah! you are arrested?"

"*Parbleu!* you certainly see that; you are not here of your own accord, are you?"

"No, certes."

"Well, neither am I."

"But why were you arrested?"

"That is what I have been trying to discover ever since morning, and if you can tell me, you will really extricate me from a great difficulty."

"What! you do not know why you were arrested?"

"No, — and you?"

"No more than you."

"And you?"

"No more than you."

"And you?"

"No more than you."

He found that the same question, addressed eight times to the prisoners, eight times produced the same response.

Among these eight captives, not one knew the cause of his captivity, and one of them moreover had been in For-l'Évêque for ten years.

He was the most calm, the most resigned.

Roger shuddered. He had not yet spent in prison as many hours as his companion had spent years.

And yet he had found the time very wearisome already.

"Ah!" thought Roger, gloomily, "I am as good as dead."

However, one always hopes that the fate of others, when bad, may not be one's own, so Roger asked his companions in captivity if he could speak to some of the authorities of the château.

"You can summon the governor when you please," was the reply.

"What! I can summon the governor?"

"Certainly."

"Simply by asking for him?"

"Simply that."

"Then I shall ask for him this evening. Messieurs, I bid you adieu."

"Adieu! and why?"

"Because I shall probably not have the honor of seeing you to-morrow."

"And why not?"

"If I see the governor this evening, I shall to-morrow, without doubt, be set at liberty."

"Poor fellow!" murmured the prisoners as they shook their heads.

Neither exclamation nor gesture prevented Roger's returning to his room in a state of elation.

His dinner was served, and he very resolutely ate the king's bread and beans.

Then, toward the end of the repast, he begged the turnkey to say to the governor of For-l'Évêque that his new prisoner desired very much to speak with him.

"It is too late to-night," replied the turnkey, "but monsieur le gouverneur will come to you to-morrow without fail."

"You are sure of it, my friend?"

"I am sure of it."

"To-morrow, then," said Roger, gathering patience as he reflected that a night is soon past.

And he went and sat down on his stool to watch through the bars of his window the last gleam of day.

He sat there, gazing at the sky and lost in meditation, when it seemed to him that he heard a slight noise close at hand.

He lowered his eyes to the floor and discovered a mouse nibbling the crumbs that had fallen.

Roger hated mice. He seized his hat and flung it at the poor little creature, which scampered away in terror and crept under the door into the large room adjoining, where she had, in all probability, taken up her abode.

For a moment, Roger was greatly disturbed at thought of the intruders that might come to pay him a visit during the night. In consequence, as long as there was a ray of light in the room, he sat with his eyes fixed upon that little aperture. Then, when night was closing in, he took the cork from his bottle which still remained on the table, and, thanks to this mate-

rial obstacle to a second visit, he remained quite at ease.

However, three or four times he awoke with a start, thinking always that he felt the little paws running over his face and hands; but, each time he managed to convince himself that there was no living creature in the room besides himself.

But such was not the case with the neighboring room, which seemed to be the rendezvous of all the cats, rats, and mice in the château.

In spite of all this Roger passed a good night: he hoped.

At noon of the next day, an hour that seemed a long time in coming, an unusual noise sounded in the corridor. Soldiers were presenting arms, steps were approaching Roger's door, a key turned in the lock, the door opened, and the governor entered.

He was a tall, spare man, whose lips scarcely moved when he spoke, and whose eyes said absolutely nothing. He held his hat in his hand, probably that he need not remove it upon entering.

"Monsieur le gouverneur," said Roger, springing to meet him, "I am the Chevalier Roger d'Anguilhem."

"I know it, monsieur," replied the governor, with an almost imperceptible movement of the lips.

"You know it?" demanded the chevalier in astonishment.

The governor bowed.

"Well, as you know who I am, monsieur le gouverneur, I should like —"

"Have you any fault to find with the regimen of the house, monsieur le chevalier?"

"No, not yet, monsieur. Besides, I have not had time to learn very precisely what it is; but I should like to know —"

"Is there anything that you lack, monsieur le chevalier?"

"Nothing, just at present; but can I know —"

"Have any of the servants of the château been wanting in civility, monsieur le chevalier?"

"No, monsieur. I have even remarked the politeness of those who serve me."

"In that case, monsieur le chevalier, since you have nothing to complain of, permit me to retire."

"Pardon me, monsieur, pardon me. I complain of being in prison."

"Ah! that does not concern me," returned the governor.

"But, tell me, why am I here?"

"You must know better than I, monsieur le chevalier."

"Better than you! Why so?"

"Because it concerns you, while, as I have had the honor of telling you, it does not concern me, and I meddle only with my own affairs."

"But you must know —"

"I know nothing, monsieur."

"But you can guess —"

"I guess at nothing, monsieur. The king sends me a prisoner, I enter him in the register, I lodge him, I see that he wants for nothing so long as he is my boarder. It is my duty, and I discharge it scrupulously."

"But the king may be deceived."

"The king is never deceived."

"But the king may be wrong."

"The king is never wrong."

"Nevertheless, I swear that I have done nothing at all."

"Monsieur, excuse me from listening to you longer."

"Monsieur, I protest that I am innocent."

"Monsieur, permit me to retire."

"But tell me, at least, if I shall remain here long, — yes or no? Monsieur, I implore you."

"As long as it shall please the king."

"Ah! that will do," cried Roger, "you drive me mad."

"I am your humble servant, monsieur."

And the governor saluted Roger, and withdrew, hat in hand, and attended by his guards.

This time the door closed, it seemed to Roger, with a sinister sound. Only then did he feel himself a prisoner. He sank upon his bench, and then his eyes, fixed and mournful, settled on that door, and, after a little time, filled with tears.

Roger thought of his parents, his friends, his God.

And then all the tales of captivity, more terrible at that period than at any other, came into his head: Bassompierre, for ten years a prisoner of the Bastile; Lauzun, held thirteen years at Pignerol; Fouquet, alive or dead, none knew where. He saw passing, one after the other, before him all those gentlemen who had been spirited away by night, and had disappeared. There were Mattioli, the Man of the Iron Mask, and that man even whom he had seen the night before, and who had been there ten years. True, all these men had committed some offence: Bassompierre had essayed to strive against Richelieu; Lauzun had compromised a granddaughter of Henry IV.; Fouquet had dared vie with Louis XIV. in luxury; Mattioli had betrayed a state secret; the Iron Mask was a political enigma. But in vain did he, Roger, rack his memory, question his past, scrutinize every day of his life; there was no crime, no misdemeanor, no imprudence even, with which to reproach himself, while all the world knew of the wrongdoing of those whose remembrance arose in his mind.

Yet the world did not know what that man had done who had spoken to him the night before, whose name, even, he did not know, and who had been there ten years.

Ten years! But did the man, then, have no relatives to solicit his pardon, or friends to take the proper steps with the ministers? Was the man quite obscure, then? Yet, if he was obscure, why had he been ten years in For-l'Évêque?

This question harassed Roger greatly for an hour or two; then he returned to the charge, and he made out such an excellent case for himself, that by degrees the feeling of security inspired by his innocence began to regain the upper hand, and all his gloomy thoughts were dissipated.

At the hour for exercise, Roger was taken out as on the preceding day; he was led to the esplanade, where, as on the preceding day, he found his eight companions.

He went up to the one who had been there ten years and asked his name.

"I am the Comte d'Olibarus," responded the latter.

Roger searched his memory; that name was quite unknown to him.

"And what is the cause of your being here? Come, comte, just between ourselves, tell me that."

"I can only repeat what I have already told you, monsieur,—I know nothing about it."

"You know nothing about it?"

"Nothing, monsieur."

"But," said Roger, lowering his voice, "during the ten years of your imprisonment have you made no attempt to escape?"

The Comte d'Olibarus gazed steadily at Roger, and turned his back upon him without replying. He took him for a spy.

"*Pardieu!*" muttered Roger to himself. "If I had been here ten years, I think I should have tried ten times to escape."

Then he added, still to himself,—

"Stop, stop, stop! although I have not been here ten years, why should I not try to get away, just the same?"

This reflection made, Roger drew near to his companions; but they all scattered from his path as if he had been the plague.

The Comte d'Olibarus had communicated to them his suspicions, and the confidence bore its fruit.

Roger was unable, therefore, to exchange a word with his fellow-prisoners, which put him into a very bad humor, and confirmed him in his mental determination to quit For-l'Évêque as soon as possible.

He resolved, then, to give the king eight days, reckoning from that moment, in which to repair the injustice which had been committed against himself, and if, at the end of those eight days, the injustice were not repaired, to bend all the faculties of his mind to one single idea:—

Escape!

XXI.

HOW THE KING NEGLECTED TO REPAIR THE INJUSTICE DONE THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

UNDER similar, although less important circumstances, we have already seen Roger at work. His resolution once taken, the reader knows with what persistence he sets about its accomplishment.

Eight days passed away, during which time Roger would have thought himself lacking in the confidence due to His Majesty, had he thought the least in the world of a project to be executed only in case of neglect. A thousand ideas presented themselves to his mind, all relating to flight, but he courageously repressed them. During the eight days time did not pass very heavily, although his companions of the terrace continued to shun him. Hope was always at his side, and every time his door opened he thought that the king, attacked by remorse, was about to repair his error.

The king probably had something else than remorse on hand. He therefore did not relent, and the eight days ran away without reparation of the wrong committed against the Chevalier d'Anguilhem.

The last minute of the last hour of the last day expired, and Roger returned seriously to his project.

He began by examining his prison. There were, —

An oak door three inches thick.

A window with double grating.

Walls four feet through.

That was the sum of his discoveries.

It left him no great degree of hope.

Roger shook the door. Two locks and two bolts were answerable for its security.

Roger tried the bars at the window. They were deeply imbedded in the masonry.

Roger sounded the walls. They everywhere gave back a dull sound indicating that they were perfectly solid.

It would have taken a crowbar to pry the door open.

It would have taken a file to cut the bars of the window.

It would have taken a pickaxe to dig a hole in the walls of that room.

Roger had none of them.

But he had the intelligence of a man bred in the country, and used to extricating himself from the thousand and one little embarrassments of life. He had the patience of the prisoner pursuing for hours, days, years, the prisoner's one and only thought, — deliverance.

He examined the interior. He would examine the exterior.

According to the custom, they came to take him out for the promenade. On leaving his little room, he crossed the large chamber which preceded it, and in which all the cats and rats of the vicinity continued every night to congregate for sport.

It was a sort of store-room with one ungrated window, opening Roger knew not where, for he was not allowed to go near the window, and for his part, he took good care not to ask permission to do so. This store-room was filled with old mattresses, bed-covers, curtains of serge, and chests. One would have said it was the shop of a retail upholsterer.

One can understand why cats, rats, and mice enjoyed a room like that.

Roger had to follow a long corridor. This corridor was closed by two doors, one opening into the room in front of his own, and the other upon a winding staircase leading to the platform.

These two doors were carefully bolted. A sentinel paced up and down the space between them.

This time Roger made no attempt to engage in conversation with his companions in captivity. His plan appealed to him, and to it he applied his thought.

Roger spent the two hours in waiting for the time to come for him to re-enter his prison. It was useless to think of escaping by way of the platform, as there would be two doors to beat down and a sentinel to overcome.

All his hopes, therefore, were centred on the store-room. Hence, on re-entering, Roger observed it with greater attention than he had yet bestowed upon it. The sounds that reached him from the window indicated that it overlooked the street. There was plenty of cloth in the bed-ticking and blankets for making a rope.

Everything was to be hoped for, then, from the store-room.

Roger went into his room, and the door was shut upon him with its double lock and double bolts.

The prisoner's mind was centred upon one idea, — that his escape, if it were possible, could be accomplished only through the store-room.

Roger was separated from liberty only by a door. But what a door! A wall of oak three inches thick fitted into a wall of stone!

Not a screw, not a nail, was on the side toward Roger's cell. All the work of construction was on the outside. Consequently, there was no chance to unscrew

bolts or locks even with the proper tool with which to do it.

But the tool, — he had not even that.

Supper was brought to the prisoner. He cast a long look through the open doorway and heard the cries of passing street-venders.

Roger ate his supper. Then, supper over, he threw himself upon his bed.

After a while he heard a slight sound. He craned his neck and saw the little mouse, which, reassured by the stillness, ventured to come and eat again of the crumbs from his table.

This time Roger was quite astonished that he felt none of his former dread of the rodent species. This little animal coming to visit the prisoner and petitioning to be allowed to live from his superfluity already inspired him with more of interest than of repugnance. Besides, Roger began to suffer ennui, and the visitor promised diversion.

And so, in his pride, he wished to address to it some words of encouragement, convinced that the mouse was waiting only for those few words to come, full of gratitude for the honor paid him; but the mouse, having, on the contrary, ventured into the room only on the conviction that its enemy was not there, had scarcely heard the chevalier's voice before it disappeared like a flash.

Having railed against the injustice of man, Roger now railed against the ingratitude of mice.

Then night came. Roger undressed and went to bed. As it was against the regulations to give prisoners a light, the prisoners went to bed at sunset.

Unfortunately for Roger, he had, since leaving d'Anguilhem, lost the habit of going to bed early. On

the contrary, during his visit to Paris, he had contracted that of sitting up very late. That was the epoch of little suppers, and Roger went to bed only about two o'clock in the morning. Besides, when he used to retire at eight o'clock in the evening, at Anguilhem, it was after a hard day spent in hunting, riding, or fencing. In that life, physical weariness very quickly invited sleep; but in prison it was a very different thing. The turgid stream that boiled in his veins had now no outlet of escape. The blood rushed to the prisoner's head. His arteries throbbed as if he had a fever. He closed his eyes, and fell into the sort of somnolence which is neither waking nor sleeping. And then the most extraordinary visions would pass before his eyes. This night wore on as he turned and tossed. Then, at about two o'clock in the morning, he fell into a leaden sleep, into which, after a time, crept troubled dreams. He grew wings like a bird and flew away through the window. He turned into a mouse and slipped out under the door. Then just as he was running along the gutters, or traversing the skyey plains, feet or wings would suddenly fail, and he would find himself whirling down through infinite depths, to awake before reaching the bottom, his heart bounding, his lungs panting, and his forehead dripping with perspiration.

From then until daylight there was no going to sleep again.

With the sun's first ray, Roger sprang out of bed. Forthwith he began to prowl around his cell like a bear in a cage, examining window and walls, but always ending by halting in front of the door.

That accursed door, which wanted only the inscription of despair to resemble that of the infernal regions!

It was certainly through that door that he would have to pass.

Roger's morning meal was brought. He ate rapidly, scattering as much bread as possible on the floor, throwing crumbs as far as the door, and stationed himself on his stool in the corner farthest from the door.

Thanks to all these preparations, he very soon saw his neighbor's sharp nose.

In spite of the impunity with which she had invaded the room on the night before, and of Roger's encouragement, the little creature hesitated long before venturing further. She withdrew her nose, put it back, again withdrew it; but at last attracted by the crumbs strewn over the boards, and especially by Roger's immovability, she darted into the room, stopping suddenly as if frightened at her own hardihood; but soon, reassured by her apparent safety, she began to nibble at the crumbs with a multitude of little grimaces, skips, and antics which greatly amused Roger. Roger would never have believed that a mouse could be so diverting.

Unfortunately, Roger, who had sat as motionless as a statue, felt himself seized by a cramp in the leg, and made a movement so abrupt that the mouse took to flight.

On the instant Roger reflected that under either of two conditions he could do as the mouse had just done. First, if he were the size of the hole; second, if the hole were the size of him.

It was evident that only one of the two conditions was among the possibilities.

This proposition being thoroughly demonstrated to Roger, since its meaning was, as we have said, perfectly evident, he put to himself the following question, —

"How can a hole be made in wood?"

And he answered, —

"In two ways: with iron and with fire."

To procure an iron implement was impossible.

To obtain fire was difficult merely.

Roger arrived at this conclusion, —

"I must have fire."

Unhappily there was no excuse for complaining of cold. It was midsummer, and Roger well knew that he would never have patience to wait for winter. And besides, between this time and that the governor might take it into his head to change his room.

Roger then began to study the ways and means of procuring fire.

That very evening his plan was decided upon.

At nine o'clock the sentinel on duty in the corridor heard groaning. He listened at each end of the passage alternately, and was satisfied that the groaning issued from Roger's room.

At ten o'clock, when the first round was passing, the sentinel communicated his observations to the officer in command. The officer approached the door and satisfied himself as to the truth of the sentinel's report. Moans and groans were issuing from Roger's room, and, as Roger was alone on that side, there could be no mistake about it. It was he that was doing the groaning and moaning.

A turnkey was called.

The turnkey came, opened Roger's door, and found the prisoner extended upon his bed and complaining of horrible pains in his stomach. The resident physician was summoned. He came, and ordered an infusion of linden-leaves for the sick man, tea not having been discovered at that date.

The next morning Roger kept his bed, still complain-

ing of pains which, he said, resembled burning. About two o'clock, nevertheless, he ate some soup brought to him from the governor's own table. But the soup swallowed, the groaning recommenced. The doctor ascended again, and Roger informed the doctor that he knew they meant to poison him.

The doctor immediately administered antidotes; but, as he had suspected, he found not an atom of any poisonous substance in what the prisoner had eaten.

Roger nevertheless persisted in representing himself as a victim of poison, and he declared that he would die of hunger rather than eat any food from that moment that had not been prepared by himself.

The remainder of the day Roger kept his word. He did not touch his supper, which the warden found intact on taking him his breakfast the next morning.

At the hour of exercise Roger asked to be let out; but he was told that the hour had been changed. It was feared that if Roger found himself on the platform with the other prisoners, he might complain to them of having been poisoned, and that the calumny might be received by his comrades as truth.

They did not come for him, therefore, until about five o'clock. Roger had not eaten since noon of the day before. He was very pale and apparently suffered much. He was unable to continue standing on the platform, and they were obliged to bring him a chair. He remained seated all the time.

On returning through the store-room which led to his own room, he felt ill, but did not faint quite away. Then, in weakened tones, he asked for air, and was led to the window.

Roger put his head outside of the dormer, and he saw that the opening overlooked the Quai de la Vallée-de-

Misère. A distance of sixty feet, at the least, separated him from the ground, and, as all the other windows in the stories below were furnished with iron bars, he saw beneath him a forest of gratings, whose points were upturned toward him. Roger shuddered at the sight, which circumstance his warden naturally set down to his illness; but Roger decided nevertheless that he would escape by that route.

Again in his room, Roger persisted in refusing every form of nourishment, continuing to declare that he would much rather die of hunger than of poison.

Such an accusation was too grave not to disturb the governor. So the next morning at breakfast-time, he presented himself at his boarder's room. He found the supper just as it had been left the night before. It was almost fifty hours since Roger had eaten.

Hence Roger was very weak and greatly changed. The governor entered the most reassuring protests, offering to taste in his presence everything that was brought to him; but Roger steadily refused to eat, saying that such a demonstration would prove nothing, since the governor, either before or after eating, could take some antidote and thus neutralize the effect of the poison.

The governor was very much perplexed. He had not been told the cause of the Chevalier d'Anguilhem's imprisonment. It might be for a trivial offence, or it might be for a serious one, and, in either case, the king might at any time wish to have his prisoner produced alive, whether to set him free or to punish him. He therefore asked Roger what he desired, promising him to do all that he was able to satisfy him, if, however, the desire came within his power.

Roger renewed the request that he had already made, that is, that he might himself prepare his own food.

Otherwise, he declared that he had suffered so much from the two poisonings to which he had been subjected that he was ready to let himself perish of hunger.

As, upon the whole, the governor saw no great harm in doing what Roger asked, he granted his request. In the meantime, as Roger was very weak, they sent him up two eggs so newly-laid that they were yet warm, and a bottle of Bordeaux wine.

As the eggs had no visible crack, as the bottle of Bordeaux seemed to have been corked a long time, and as the seal upon it was perfectly intact, Roger made no difficulty about swallowing the two eggs and drinking a glass of wine.

Needless to say, the prisoner experienced no indisposition after taking this light repast.

But, light as it was, it somewhat restored Roger's strength. Roger, who was little used to observing fasts, had suffered terribly from this one which had been self-imposed, and, had the governor not so obligingly extricated him from his predicament, he might perhaps have lacked courage to play much longer the comedy that he had planned.

At last he had gained his end. They brought him a chafing-dish, a pair of bellows, some embers, a few plates, a few earthen saucepans, and then eggs, vegetables, and butter.

Besides there was a great urn full of water.

Roger was a hunter, which means that more than once when coursing the Anguilhem estate, or neighboring territory, he had had occasion to prepare his own dinner. He was therefore not at all embarrassed when it became a question of putting to use the utensils that had been brought him; and, whether fasting had prepared him to enjoy the meal, or whether indeed his ideas of the culi-

nary art were instinctive or acquired, — or, as says Brillat-Savarin of gastronomic fame, whether he had become a cook or was born a chef, — he did ample justice to the dinner prepared by himself.

During the night following this meal no groans disturbed the sentinel, who, moreover, was reputed to have a very acute ear. Also, on that night, Roger, suspecting that the strictest watchfulness had been enjoined, was content to go to sleep, and he slept even more soundly, it is probable, than he had done at any time since entering the prison.

The next morning the governor came in person to inform himself concerning his prisoner's health. He found him risen, and engaged in preparing his breakfast. These promising conditions exempted the governor from a prolonged interview. He contented himself, therefore, with asking Roger about his health, and receiving thanks for his favors. He then took his leave with the same vacant look, the same immobility of the lips that the prisoner had remarked in his host at the time of the first visit that he had received from him.

At five o'clock they came to take Roger for his customary exercise. The measure adopted by the governor, of allowing him no communication with the other prisoners, was still enforced. Roger walked alone, then, and meditated on his plan, which he had decided to put into operation the following night.

The remainder of the afternoon and all the next day passed without event. Nothing occurred to change the plan as decided upon. The auguries were neither good nor bad. There was neither comet nor eclipse of the sun. Roger therefore experienced not even a moment of indecision.

A stout heart, moreover, was Roger's ordinarily, as we have said, and one especially unyielding in carrying out his resolutions.

Yet it was with beating heart that he saw night arrive. But, we hasten to add, his emotion did not arise from the dangers to which he was about to expose himself, but from the fear that some unforeseen circumstance might prevent his escape. Nevertheless, he dined at his usual hour, and with his ordinary appetite, and when his room was visited, as usual, at about eight o'clock in the evening, he was found already in bed and quite settled for the night.

There were two hours to wait. The first round was made at ten o'clock in the evening, and the second at three o'clock in the morning. Now, it occasionally happened, rarely it is true, but it had already happened twice since Roger had been in For-l'Évêque, that the officer caused the doors of the cells to be opened, and scrutinized the walls and the bars to assure himself that the prisoners were meditating no attempt at escape. Hence Roger could not act upon his plans before ten o'clock.

And Roger did well to wait. For, at the usual hour, the steps of the patrol began to be heard, then the steps drew nearer, then the store-room door was opened, then that of Roger's room. Roger feared for a moment that all was discovered; but he immediately reflected that the thing was impossible, since no preparations had been made in advance that could betray him, nor had he any confidant who could denounce him. He thereupon composed his countenance, and appeared to have been aroused from the deepest slumber. As Roger had supposed, it was merely a precautionary measure, and, after sounding the walls, shaking the bars, and scrutinizing the door, the officer went out saying, —

"Very well!"

The prisoner sat up in his bed, listening to the sound of the retreating footsteps. Then, when every noise, every sound, every echo had died away in the prison depths, he cautiously got out of bed, walking with bare feet. He went to the door and listened. All was quiet, all was silent. He breathed again.

In an instant Roger was dressed.

Having been arrested just as he was, since Basque was to bring his trunks, which, setting off at a moment's notice, he had been unable to take with him, Roger had succeeded in having some shirts made and some handkerchiefs bought. From the chest, then, in which his linen was kept, he began to take everything that could be twisted into rope or woven into strands, to form, in short, a substitute for a ladder. Then he laid it all on his bed, and, to lose no time, he heaped against the door a pile of charcoal which he lighted. After that he returned to his ladder.

First, the sheets and coverlets of the bed were used. Next, at the end of the sheets and coverlets, torn into strips, he knotted the twisted shirts and braided handkerchiefs. During all this time the coal was burning, and, in order not to be asphyxiated, Roger was obliged to go to the window every five minutes for air. The night was pitch-dark, and such as was needed for a plan as hazardous as Roger's.

Meanwhile, the coal, converted into embers, accomplished its work. A horrible smoke ensued; but, fortunately, the wind blew in at the window from the quay, so that all smoke was driven back into the room of the prisoner, whom it would certainly have suffocated, had he not, as we have said, thrust his face between the bars of the window from time to time.

Roger heard eleven o'clock strike, and half-past eleven.

At last, toward midnight, the hole made in the door, and shaped like the mouth of an oven, seemed to him large enough to pass through. He extinguished the fire with water, cleared away the dead embers, enlarged the opening still more by breaking out portions of the charred wood, and then he lay down on his back, and, with the part of the rope already prepared in his hand, he crawled through like a snake, and a moment later found himself in the store-room.

Here he was able to breathe more freely. Then he went and listened at the door of the corridor, where he heard the slow, measured tread of the sentinel.

All was going well.

He then proceeded to grope his way toward the place where, when passing through, he had seen a heap of blankets, and to the rope already made he began to add the strips which he noiselessly tore off, and by the aid of which he thought to give his perilous ladder a length sufficient to carry him to the ground.

The rope completed, he looked about for a place to which it could be fastened; but the window presented no brace strong enough to risk his life upon it. He remembered then that his bed had four posts, originally designed to carry a tester now wanting. He returned to his room by the same route that he had come out, unscrewed one of the four posts, transferred it to the store-room, tied the rope to the middle of the post, placed the post across the window in such a way that it was perfectly secure. Then, recommending his soul to God, murmuring the names of his father and mother, and giving a last thought to Constance, he crept backward through the window, and, clutching the rope with both hands and knees, he began his slow and perilous descent

into the abyss, down which the morning before, he had been unable to look without a shudder.

As we have said, the distance between the window and the ground was more than sixty feet. In addition to the courage required for undertaking this task, marvellous skill and strength were needed for its execution. But Roger was strong and agile. He did not hurry himself in any way. Not one of his movements was quicker than another. At every knot, he paused a moment to rest, using his feet to clear himself from the sharp bars of the windows. He counted thus three stories that he had passed. Then, suddenly, he felt nothing more between his knees; he searched in vain. He had come to the end of the rope. He groped about with his feet for some support, but he found nothing. He tried to penetrate the gloom around him, but the night was so black that he could see nothing. It might have been a bottomless abyss. For an instant he thought of climbing back and adding new strips of linen to those he had knotted together, but he felt that his strength would desert him before he had gone half-way. Then a cold sweat overspread his forehead. He was as likely to be twenty feet as two feet from the ground. He knew that it had become a question of good luck or bad luck, that his life was in the hands of fate. He lowered himself to the very end of the rope. Then, murmuring a few words of prayer, he abandoned himself to his fate and let go the rope.

Almost instantly a half-stifled cry of pain reached the sentinel, and he gave the alarm. The people ran out with torches, and discovered Roger, who had fainted away, caught on the top of an iron bar whose point had pierced his thigh.

XXII.

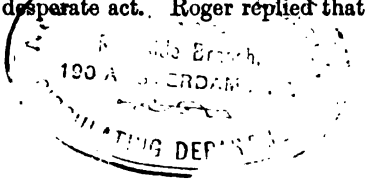
HOW THE KING AT LAST REMEMBERS THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM, AND WHAT COMES OF IT.

When Roger came to himself he was in a strange room. A doctor was at his side, and he was in a better and cleaner bed than prison beds are wont to be, hence for an instant he thought he was free; but, unfortunately for the chevalier, such was not the case. The governor had caused him to be transferred for the time being to a room of his own suite.

The wound was severe without being dangerous, although Roger was very weak, owing to the loss of an enormous quantity of blood. His first thought was to discover whether he could not profit by the accident itself to attempt a second escape. On a pretext of needing air, he begged the physician to open the window; like the other windows of For-l'Évêque, the window was provided with a grating on the outside.

When the surgeon took his leave, charging Roger to rest, Roger heard the door secured behind him with double fastenings. Roger was in a prison, a trifle more commodious, a trifle more elegant, but it was still a prison.

The next morning, the governor in person came to pay him a visit, and to learn directly from himself the reasons that had induced him to attempt so perilous an escape; he desired, he said, to be assured that it had been neither the fare, which was rather frugal, perhaps, nor the rules of the house, somewhat strict, it might be, that had led him to the desperate act. Roger replied that neither



had been the cause. He knew that people were as well off in For-l'Évêque as they could be in any prison, and only his desire to regain the liberty that he had not deserved to lose had brought him to that extremity. The governor entreated him to sign a declaration to that effect, which, he said, would constitute his own defence with the authorities. Roger instantly complied with his request.

Indeed, Roger saw a ray of hope in that very declaration. In his simplicity of soul, the poor boy still believed himself the victim of a mistake, which, one day or another, could not fail to be recognized. Now, one means of gaining recognition was, in his opinion, to bring his name as speedily as possible before the eyes of the authorities, and in any manner whatever.

This simple circumstance gave Roger fresh courage. So little it takes to buoy up the hopes of even those who should despair!

He waited, then, with more patience than he would have done but for this incident, and his wound progressed favorably. At the end of eight days Roger sat up, and at the end of fifteen he began to be able to walk unaided about his room. In the meantime, the governor had visited him three times, and, on each occasion, Roger had asked the governor if he were quite sure that his declaration had come to the eyes of the minister of police. At his first inquiry, and at the second, the governor had replied that he hoped so; but the third time, he was able to assure the prisoner that it was so, since, as a reward for the active surveillance which he had displayed on that occasion, he had just been made a chevalier of Saint Louis.

The prisoner congratulated the governor very sincerely on the favor just shown him by the king, nor did he

doubt that, following upon the inquiry that must be made regarding his own accident, he himself would soon be set at liberty. There were even moments when he thought that his release could not fail to be marked likewise by a favor from His Majesty; the king, in his opinion, was too just to allow such injustice to pass without reparation. However, it is due to Roger to say that he did not dwell upon this idea of extreme justice except in moments of optimism, which he himself regarded as somewhat exaggerated after they had vanished.

However, more than fifteen days had passed since the effort to escape which we have just chronicled, the chevalier improving more and more, when the governor one night entered his room.

"Monsieur le Chevalier d'Anguilhem," he said, in his usual tone of voice, and without Roger's being able to catch his roving glance, "rise and dress yourself."

"Rise and dress myself?" repeated Roger.

"Yes, monsieur; we are to part."

"Ah!" exclaimed Roger, "I knew indeed that, sooner or later, my innocence would be established."

The governor made no reply.

"Monsieur le gouverneur," said Roger, while hastily dressing, "trust me, if I am questioned with regard to you, I shall endeavor, as I have already done, to render justice to your excellent treatment of me."

The governor bowed without other response.

"And if either I or my friends can render you any service, I shall seize the opportunity, not only with eagerness but also with gratitude."

The governor stammered a few unintelligible words.

"But," continued Roger, "I am still too weak to go on foot. Will you have the kindness, monsieur le gouverneur, to have a carriage called?"

"There is one at the door."

"Then, many thanks, monsieur le gouverneur. I will not ask for the pleasure of seeing you again at your house, but at mine, the old Hôtel Bouzenois, Place Louis-le-Grand."

The governor again bowed without speaking; however, as the chevalier was now ready, he paid little attention to the fact, but extended his hand to the governor, and, leaning on the arm of a soldier, he took his departure.

The chevalier advanced to the door through a double line of guards; at the door, he saw in fact a carriage awaiting him, and he turned to bow to the governor a last time, but the governor had remained behind.

Roger sprang into the carriage very lightly for a wounded man, and as they were shutting the door, cried in joyful tones, —

"Place Louis-le-Grand, Hôtel Bouzenois."

It seemed to him that a burst of laughter greeted his direction, but giving it no thought, he extended his wounded leg on the seat in front of him, and leaned back in a corner of his carriage.

After a while, he observed two musketeers galloping on either side of the carriage. The excessive honor shown him by His Majesty in sending him home with an escort, began to disturb Roger.

Then, instead of descending the quay, the carriage seemed to be crossing La Cité; this was by no manner of means the route to the Place Louis-le-Grand.

Roger, therefore, approached the window and questioned the guards; but doubtless the noise of the carriage-wheels and the clatter of the horses' hoofs on the pavement prevented their hearing him, for in vain did he reiterate his questions; they won no responses.

At last, after bowling along for nearly a quarter of an hour, Roger distinguished a great isolated building. He put his head outside the window, fixed his eyes on that black mass carved out of the darkness, and, to his infinite terror, he recognized the Bastile.

What Roger had taken for a release was merely a transference; and the favor that the king had done him was to take him from For-l'Évêque to place him in the Bastile.

Under the archway, Roger was required to descend and be searched, as was usual with prisoners that were brought to the Bastile. Then he was taken over the bridge and the door of the guard-house was opened. He was to wait there until his room was ready.

Roger was so stunned that he made no movement, offered no word. They came for him at the end of a quarter of an hour. One of the musketeers that had escorted his carriage offered him his arm to lean upon. Roger let himself be led like a condemned man that is taken to the scaffold. However, in passing through a very dark corridor, he felt his guide slip a little note into his hand. He trembled.

"From the Marquis de Cretté," whispered the musketeer.

Roger was about to speak, but the musketeer at the same moment gave place to a comrade and disappeared.

The prisoner had just been searched, and consequently he had nothing to fear on that score. He put his hand into his pocket and dropped the note into it. Then he rested his hand on the shoulder of his new guide. They soon came to a staircase. Doubtless they had taken into consideration the prisoner's wound, for he was made to ascend to the second floor only. Arrived there, a door was opened, then a second, then a third, and Roger found

himself in a room where, by the light of the torches following him, he saw something like a bed. Almost immediately, the door of the cell was closed. He heard the locks and bolts of the other doors grate in turn. He was again a prisoner.

As he was very tired and his leg was giving him great pain, he took his bearings for the purpose of finding his bed, and turned in the direction in which he supposed it must be. He found it in fact; but just as he was sitting down upon it, a voice said, —

"Monsieur, may I ask what you desire?"

"Pardon, monsieur," cried Roger, rising, "I did not know that the bed was occupied."

"It is, monsieur, as you perceive," returned the voice, "and as mine is the right of priority, allow me to keep it."

"Why, that is very proper, monsieur," replied Roger; "but since, in your capacity of pioneer, you doubtless know the premises better than I, kindly tell me whether there is a chair, a bench, a stool, a seat of any kind, in short, on which I can sit. I am wounded in the thigh, and I feel that if I am kept standing any longer I may faint away."

"Search around, monsieur," answered the voice; "there ought to be an arm-chair somewhere."

Roger searched about, with his hands outstretched like a man playing blind-man's buff, and he at last came in contact with the arm-chair.

He sank into it and began to reflect.

In the first place, at the sound of that voice, it seemed to him that he had heard it somewhere, but he could not tell where. In vain he sought to apply it to some one of his acquaintances. His mind became more and more confused. Then he thought that a better way to con-

duct his research would be frankly to ask his fellow-prisoner who he was.

"Monsieur," said Roger, "when people are destined, as I fear we are, to live for some time in the same room, the best thing to do is promptly to form acquaintance, that we may know whom we have the honor to address."

"But who are you yourself?" said the voice.

"I am Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem, — a prisoner by mistake," said Roger; "and you are right, it is quite proper that I should give my name first. And now, who are you?"

"I, monsieur, am number 158."

"What does that mean, — number 158?"

"It is the designation that has taken the place of my name and title. To-morrow, you will no longer be called the Chevalier d'Anguilhem; you will be number 159, or 160, or 161."

Roger groaned at the thought that, having lost his liberty, he was about to lose his name, and, having been a man, he was to become a number.

"Have you been here long enough to forget your other name?"

"No; but I might be punished, perhaps, if I remembered it," said the voice.

"*Diable!* you are cautious!" exclaimed Roger.

"When you have been, like me, ten years, three months, and five days under lock and key," returned the voice, "it is, I promise you, a virtue that you yourself will practise."

"Ten years!" cried Roger, "ten years, three months, and five days! I would ten times rather dash my brains out against these walls."

"Monsieur," said the voice, "you will not take it amiss if I no longer answer you."

"And why not, pray?"

"Because our great king, Louis XIV., whom God preserve, is indeed our master, to call us by what name and number he pleases, and to keep us in his château as long as it suits him."

"Oh, to be sure, I know you," cried Roger; "your very caution has betrayed you — you are the Comte d'Olibarus!"

"I am not the Comte d'Olibarus," cried the voice; "I am number 158."

Just then, steps were heard in the corridor.

"Ah! you have undone me!" cried the poor count, "and this is the second time. The first time, you spoke to me on the terrace of For-l'Évêque, and as it was found that you meant to escape, I was believed to be your accomplice and was brought here. You have just spoken to me the second time, and I shall be placed in some dungeon, which I shall never leave."

The outer door was heard to open.

"But, monsieur le comte —" began Roger.

"Silence! monsieur, in heaven's name, silence! Keep still, not a word; I do not know you; I have never spoken to you; I have never seen you."

And Comte d'Olibarus muffled himself up in his blankets, and turned his nose to the wall.

The poor prisoner was mistaken in his gloomy forebodings; they were coming merely to set up a cot for his cell-mate.

This attention gave great satisfaction to Roger, who would momentarily have been reconciled to his situation, had he been able to read Cretté's note, which he kept fingering in his pocket; but the wardens turned their backs not a moment during the time while the bed was being made, which, for that matter, did not

take long, and when they went away, they carried the candle.

Roger thought himself rid of their presence, when one of them returned and, opening the door, said, —

"By the way, the last comer is number 169."

"*Peste!*" ejaculated Roger to himself, "it seems that between the Comte d'Olibarus and me, His Majesty has received ten lodgers."

And he went to bed with the comforting reflection that if the Bastile filled up in that ratio, they would soon be obliged to put the earliest out of doors, or make eight or ten prisoners sleep in the same room, which, in the first instance, would meet with his entire approval, or, in the second, would at least afford him some diversion.

Upon which, he fell asleep, holding fast in his hand Cretté's note, which he assured himself he would read by the first ray of daylight that penetrated his prison.

But man is no more sure of himself in misfortune than in good fortune. Roger slept as well as if he had been perfectly happy, and he did not awake until broad day. At first it was with great difficulty that he recalled where he was. The sight of Comte d'Olibarus sitting on his bed and sewing the tassel on his nightcap, bewildered him quite; but, after gazing around him, and delving in the depths of his memory, Roger soon remembered that he was in the Bastile.

Then all the details of his removal recurred to his mind, and he remembered that a musketeer had given him a note from Cretté which he had not been able to read the night before, and that he had gone to sleep with the note in his hand, promising himself to read it at the first peep of day.

Roger shuddered at the idea of losing this note; he

immediately began a search, and he found it, fortunately, under his bolster.

Cretté's note contained these few lines: —

"I know that you are being transferred from For-l'Évêque to the Bastile, and through the agency of Clos-Renaud, who is a lieutenant of the Gray Musketeers, I am sending you this note. Your wife has not yet reappeared, and, should it drive you to despair, I shall say that I do not think her a stranger to your detention. Royancourt is in greater favor than ever, and by the way in which I am answered when I ask for your release, I am convinced that the blow comes from that source. Moreover, they pretend to have found at your house, written in your hand, some song or other against La Maintenon; one of those, probably, that you sang to us at Saint Germain. You see indeed that only your wife could have been guilty of this petty treason.

"We can accomplish nothing therefore toward your release; but try to escape, and hasten to my house. Two or three disguises will be ready; you can travel night and day, and, in twenty-four hours you will be in a foreign country."

This letter came like a thunder-clap to Roger. He really believed his wife guilty, he even suspected that Sylvandire had betrayed him; but that she could have been equal to having him imprisoned in For-l'Évêque, was a thing that could never have entered his mind. He was forced to believe it, however; his arrest must have created some stir; it was impossible that Sylvandire could be ignorant of it, and if she was not ignorant of it, and was not a party to the affair, how did it happen that she was not in Paris soliciting his freedom? Why had she not already mustered into service all the friends of Maître Bouteau and of Monsieur de Royancourt? Why had she not sought and obtained what is very rarely refused a woman, an interview with her husband, even though it

were in the presence of witnesses? He was indeed forced to believe what Cretté said. Besides, Cretté had not been wrong when he had predicted the future; all the more reason, therefore, that he should be right in what related to the past.

Roger tore Cretté's note into impalpable bits and threw them into the fireplace; for, in the Bastile, from the second floor up, the rooms had fireplaces. Then he rose, planning, for his part, the most terrible schemes of vengeance against the Marquis de Royancourt and Sylvandire.

But to achieve revenge he must be free, and Cretté said that he must rely only on himself for that, convinced that any measures of his would be futile. Roger then set about inventing some new way of escape. He had come so very near escaping from For-l'Évêque that, after all, he did not see why he should not get out of the Bastile.

Only, there was one great obstacle to any attempt at flight. It was the presence of the Comte d'Olibarus.

Roger meditated on his project for several days; but he meditated in vain; he hit upon nothing. During all this time, his companion showed himself more and more prudent, avoiding all conversation and replying to Roger only when the latter addressed him by his number.

Three weeks rolled away, Roger meanwhile spending his days in plotting escape and cursing the cowardice of his room-mate who, the moment the subject was broached, would threaten to call the watch. Many times was he seized with a fierce desire to strangle the count and declare that he had died of a fit of apoplexy; but, fortunately, Roger always stayed his hand in good season, reserving this extreme measure for a last expedient.

We have avowed that in spite of his preoccupation Roger slept well. Roger was scarcely twenty-one years old, and a man sleeps well at that age. Yet, occasionally, in the midst of his slumbers, strange sounds reached his ears, which he took for a phase of his dreams.

As for the count, he appeared to be still more addicted to sleep than Roger, for almost invariably, when Roger awoke, the count was still asleep.

However, one night when Roger had gone to bed revolving a new scheme in his brain, and was lying motionless with the bed-covers up to his ears, and reflecting upon all the chances, good and bad, of this new scheme, it seemed to him that the singular noise which he had more than once vaguely heard in his sleep was beginning again. He at once listened most intently, and recognized the sound as that of a muffled file proceeding from the window under which the Comte d'Olibarus had his bed. Then, without interrupting his breathing, to which, on the contrary, he applied himself, giving it all the regularity and the depth of sleep, he half-opened his eyes and directed their gaze toward the window, which, in spite of the darkness of the night, spread around it at least a faint diffusion of light. At first Roger could distinguish nothing; but by degrees his sight became accustomed to the gloom, and he then discovered the Comte d'Olibarus kneeling on his bed and filing at the bars of the window.

If ever a man was astonished, certainly Roger was. Hence he lay for a time with bated breath. The count, no longer hearing the sound of his breathing, paused at once. Roger saw that he was being watched. He made one or two movements in bed, yawned, stretched, muttered a few incoherent words like a man in a dream,

and seemed to fall asleep again. The count remained some time on his guard. Then, when Roger's breathing, calm and regular, was re-established, he resumed his task.

There was not a doubt of it. The Comte d'Olibarus, so fearful, so timid, so cautious, was himself planning to escape.

Roger promised himself to take a hand in it.

Four o'clock in the morning sounded. As in all probability the event would not come off that night, Roger went to sleep again.

On waking, Roger found the count as serene as usual. He then tried to engage him in conversation; but he succeeded no better than on other days. The count even complained aloud of the ill-luck that pursued him, of continually having thrown in his path a man so compromising as Roger.

Underlying all these complaints was such an accent of genuineness that Roger, looking first at the bars and then at the count, began to believe that he had been dreaming.

The day passed without Roger's succeeding, even by word or look or gesture, in surprising the count's secret. Then came night, for which Roger was impatiently waiting.

This time Roger did not go to sleep, but he made a pretence of doing so. Nevertheless the count lay still in bed for more than two hours, regulating his breathing by Roger's. Convinced at last that his companion slept, he rose on his knees and began again his work of the night before, and in all probability of preceding nights. Roger let him work in the greatest tranquillity.

About two o'clock the count broke off, and, rising in his bare feet, he advanced toward the fireplace. Then

he drew up the stool, and, standing on it, he spoke in a low voice, although not so low but that Roger could hear these words, —

"To-morrow everything will be ready."

A voice then said a few words in reply; but the words reached Roger's ears only as empty sound from which he could gather no meaning. However, the count replied, —

"Yes, to-morrow."

Then he listened. The same voice hummed again in the chimney, and he replied, —

"Agreed, at two o'clock."

And he very carefully returned the stool to its place, went back to his bed, lay down, and apparently went to sleep.

As for Roger, now knowing what to expect, he went to sleep in earnest.

The next day passed, like the day before, without the count's betraying by any nervousness, any flush, or any sign of impatience the plan fixed for the following night. He was the same man, so silent, so apprehensive, so timid, that Roger, who, as we have seen, was himself rather self-contained, stood in admiration before this master of dissimulation whom chance had sent him, and who so far surpassed him.

Night came. The two prisoners prepared for bed. Roger merely pretended to undress, and lay down with his clothes on.

Without doubt the count, on his part, did likewise. Soon both were snoring at a great rate, though neither the one nor the other was asleep.

Toward midnight the count rose in bed and began to saw the last bar. He worked an hour nearly. Then he got up, went to the fireplace, mounted the stool, and said, —

"Everything is ready."

The voice replied with a few words that Roger still could not understand, but which seemed to be in perfect harmony with the wishes of the count, for he contented himself with replying, —

"Good! very good."

Then the count got down off his stool and cast himself upon his bed.

Half an hour went by.

Then the count arose, went to the door and listened, and, after assuring himself that the deepest quiet reigned throughout the interior of the prison, he stood a moment like one in a dream. Then, with a slow step, the sound of which his room-mate could scarcely detect, he drew near Roger's bed.

For a moment Roger had an idea that the count was coming to assassinate him, and thus make sure of his silence. He lay on guard then, certain, although he was defenceless, of easily getting the better of an old man who would have for a weapon merely a stiletto, a knife, or a poniard. He therefore held himself in readiness to grasp his arm the moment it should be lifted above him.

But the count did not raise his arm. He extended it merely, and touched him on the shoulder.

Instantly Roger was on his feet before the count, who recoiled a step.

"Silence!" said the count.

"The more willingly as I know all, my dear count," returned Roger.

"How so?"

"For three nights I have not slept, nor have I lost, I will not say sight, but hearing, of you."

"Then you guess what I am about?"

"Perfectly, and I am ready."

"Dress yourself."

"I am dressed."

"Capital!"

"You perceive that you did me injustice in not trusting me."

"You are so young!"

"Yes, but I have courage and determination."

"I know it, and that is why I had resolved to notify you when you would need only those two virtues. The time is at hand; get ready."

"I am ready! What are we to do?"

"As you are aware, I have succeeded in communicating with two prisoners in the room above us. One of the two is a friend of mine, and we were on the point of escaping together from For-l'Évêque, when your own flight caused us to be sent to the Bastile. Happily, we have been separated only by one floor, and have succeeded in communicating with each other through the aperture of the chimney. We have a file. Each of us has sawed the bars of his window. Our two neighbors will let down to us a rope that they have made with their own sheets and blankets, to which we will add our sheets and blankets. They will then pull up the rope, attach it to one of the unsawed bars, and, as the two windows are directly one above the other, we shall descend, they from their window, we from ours."

"Capital!"

"Then it suits you?"

"Perfectly. Yet, my dear count, now that we are to flee together, come, tell me frankly, why are you in the Bastile?"

"Do you wish to know?"

"Yes, truly it would give me great satisfaction," said Roger. "By yours I can rate my own offence. You have been a prisoner ten years. I shall know about how long the king was counting upon retaining me as a boarder."

"Well, I had the imprudence to say — "

"You had the imprudence to say?" repeated Roger.

"That the king — " continued the count, lowering his voice.

"Well, that the king?"

"Was getting so blind that — "

"That — "

"That he saw only through Madame de Maintenon's spectacles."

"What!" cried Roger. "Ten years for that?"

"Hush, pray!"

"You have been in prison ten years for that?"

"Ten years, three months, and five days."

"Ah! *mon Dieu!* Well, in that case, I am in for life."

"What have you done?"

"I? I composed one or two songs about her."

"And it is known?"

"It seems that my wife has parted with the originals."

"In your handwriting?"

"In my handwriting."

"Then, my dear friend, you are very fortunate to have found a chance to escape, for, as you have just remarked, you were in for life."

"Or for theirs," returned Roger.

"Which may still be a very long time," replied the count. "Egotists live a hundred and fifty years, like parrots; but hush, here is our rope coming down."

Thereupon the count approached the chimney, in

which the end of a sheet was hanging. The two prisoners then set to work to join their sheets and blankets, end for end, with the one that had been lowered. Then, the operation finished, the prisoners in the upper story drew up the whole.

The count then approached the window, and, with Roger's help, wrenched away the two bars which were now held in place only by a bit of iron, and which, on being broken out, left a space wide enough for a man to pass through.

It was agreed that the count should go first and Roger next.

Both got up on the bed, holding themselves in readiness.

They heard the sound of the rope lightly touching as it descended.

Then they could distinguish an opaque body. It was one of the prisoners from the upper story. He reached the ground without accident and waited.

The second passed in his turn, and he also stood in safety beside the first.

Then it was the turn of the count, who reached the ground with the same good fortune. Then, last of all, went Roger, and he joined his companions.

Twenty steps away there was a sentinel who kept pacing back and forth, sometimes turning his back upon the fugitives, sometimes coming toward them.

There was no way of escape except by going within ten steps of him. They must leap from the rampart into the foss, swim the foss, scale the opposite slope, let themselves down from there on some low-roofed house of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, and escape by way of the mansards or the gutters. There were twenty chances of breaking their necks.

It was nevertheless agreed that, just as the sentinel was about to turn, the four fugitives should make a dash, every man for himself.

So said, so done. The soldier went the length of his beat; then he turned.

At the same instant the four fugitives ran straight for the ditch.

Roger heard the sentinel's challenge, "Who goes there?" saw a long flash followed by a report, felt one of his comrades roll between his legs, and became conscious at the same time, by a sensation as from the violent lash of a whip, that he was struck in the side; but he plunged into the ditch, nevertheless, and began to swim for the opposite bank. Meanwhile a great hue and cry arose from the Bastile. Windows became alight, torches began to move rapidly about, and the soldiers shouted: "To arms! to arms!"

Roger kept on swimming. The water prevented his feeling pain. Hence he reached the bank thinking himself but slightly wounded; but he had barely set foot upon the ground before he felt that his strength was failing.

He summoned, therefore all his courage, and, aiding himself with his hands, continued to toil up the grassy slope; but it seemed to him that the sky had turned the color of blood. A ringing noise like that of a bell sounded in his ears. He tried to speak, to call mechanically for help, and his voice died in his throat. Then he raised himself again, beating the air with his hands, made a last effort, in which his remaining faculties were exhausted, and fell back fainting.

His two remaining comrades continued their flight. As we have said, it had been agreed that each man should think only of himself.

XXIII.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM WENT FROM THE BASTILE TO THE CHÂTEAU DE CHALON-SUR-SAÔNE, AND MADE THE JOURNEY IN COMPANY WITH AN OFFICER OF VERY SPRIGHTLY CHARACTER.

THE Comte d'Olibarus was killed, and Roger was dangerously wounded. The count was buried as Number 158, and Roger was returned to the Bastile.

But Roger was a Hercules. In three weeks' time he was on his feet again, still weak, but quite out of danger. What is more, his two accidents had sobered him very much with regard to attempts at escape, and he was, for the time being at least, almost cured of his mania for flight.

But, what he was not cured of, what he promised himself never to be cured of, was hatred of Sylvandire, to whom, according to what Cretté had told him, he owed, first, his incarceration, and next the two wounds that had resulted from it. True, in ridding herself of Roger by means of For-l'Évêque and the Bastile, means so commonly resorted to in those days, Sylvandire could not foresee that he would have the bad taste to attempt to escape, and that those two attempts would end so unfortunately for him; but it was not the less true that the cause of it all was Sylvandire.

Hence the chevalier promised himself, once free, to visit upon her a cruel vengeance. But what should that vengeance be? Roger had no idea as yet. He knew only that some day he would be revenged.

One evening, after he had all day given himself up to these soothing reflections, he heard steps in his corridor. As it was at an unusual hour, and as, after four or five months of prison life, he was beginning to know the ways of such establishments, he was convinced that a new turn was to be given to his affairs. In fact, two soldiers entered and stationed themselves at either side of his door. The governor followed them, and after saluting Roger, he invited the latter to gather up his belongings in the room and follow him. The inventory was not long. One of the turnkeys shouldered the little bundle, and Roger obeyed the governor.

They traversed the corridor that opened upon the inner court, then the court itself, then the archway, all between a double line of guards. Then, on the other side, they found a carriage. Another transfer was on foot.

Roger, who was beginning to be skeptical as to the memory of His Majesty, Louis XIV., did not deceive himself this time. Besides, there was a mounted musketeer at either door of the carriage and an officer was sitting inside. The prisoner then saluted the governor, thanking him for the care bestowed on his wound, and took his place beside the officer. Instantly the door was locked, and the vehicle set off at full speed.

Part of Paris was crossed without Roger's being able to see in what direction the carriage was taking him. It was the kind of night that is usually chosen for the transfer of prisoners. However, by the fresher and purer atmosphere, he soon felt that they were outside of the capital. He leaned toward the window, from which he could make out trees and fields; but as he appeared very much absorbed in the sight, the officer remarked, —

"I warn you, monsieur, that the coach is locked, that two musketeers are galloping beside us, that I have a pistol in each pocket, and that my orders are to fire on you at the slightest effort on your part to escape. You see, I tell you this," the officer continued, "because I am an old soldier, and I should not like to kill a gentleman without telling him why. Now, you have your warning. The rest is your affair."

With a sigh Roger flung himself back into the depths of the carriage. He was beginning to entertain a lively esteem for material force, which he had heretofore known only as something to combat and to vanquish.

"But, in short," said Roger, "where am I to be taken now?"

"I am forbidden to say," responded the officer. "Ah! You were recommended to me as a keen fellow that takes advantage of the slightest indiscretion."

Roger gave vent to a deep groan.

"Come, now! come, now!" continued the officer. "Use a little reason and you will not give up for that. I have conducted women who put a better face on the matter than you."

"Then you are taking me to another prison?" said Roger.

"Oh! as for that, if I were to say no, you would not believe me. So I will answer frankly, yes."

"To Pignerol or to the Îles Sainte Marguerite," murmured Roger. "Ah! Fouquet! ah! Lauzun!"

"'Sh!" exclaimed the officer. "'Sh! Don't spoil matters by talking to me of all those great men. Let us go along quietly now, and not meddle with politics. Come, I am a good-hearted fellow myself, and it is very fortunate that you did not fall into the hands of some of my confrères, so surly and uncivil that they

would not have said a word to you the whole way. I, on the contrary, like a man to be a gentleman. I detest not talking, and I consider it much better to make the poor prisoners laugh than to make them cry, being at quits afterwards to show them teeth and claws if they are ungrateful for my consideration; but I must say that has never happened to me. Come, be a good fellow like the rest, and I promise you the journey shall not seem long."

"Ah!" said Roger, with a shudder. "That is it; we are going to the other side of France. Ah! Mattioli! oh! the Iron Mask!"

"Again, again!" resumed the officer. "Oh! i' faith, my gentleman, you promise me a very disagreeable journey, while I would like nothing better, for my part, than to make the trip a cheerful one. Come, rouse up, put a good face on it. I do not mean literally, as your face is not to be seen, — although I can guess that you are making a wry mouth, — and I will talk to you, although I am expressly forbidden to do so."

"And what will you talk about?" asked Roger.

"Ah! *dame!* of matters and things, of rain or shine. Anything is better than sulking like a pike."

"But there is only one thing that I wish to know. There is but one point on which I wish to be enlightened."

"Well, speak out, what is it?"

"Where are we going?"

"I am forbidden to tell you."

"Ah! you see, indeed."

"Yes; but I am not forbidden to tell you where we are not going."

"Oh! tell me, then."

"First of all, let us settle some trifling conditions.

Promise that you will not try to escape, and that you will not be sad any longer. Ah! look here, sadness is the death of me!"

"But will you, in return," said Roger, "give me your word as an old soldier that you will deliver a message with which I may charge you?"

"I?"

"Yes, you."

"You might offer me one hundred crowns and I would promise you nothing. Why, think of it, my dear monsieur, your demand is absurd. Come! And why should the king have you under guard if not to keep you from sending messages? Now, pray be sensible!"

Roger reflected that he would gain nothing from his comrade's ill-will, while he might, on the other hand, lose a great deal by it. Escape seemed impossible. Besides, as we have said, he was for the time being cured of that monomania. So, after a moment's silence, he said to his fellow-traveller, —

"Well, monsieur, I pledge you my word as a gentleman that I will make no attempt at escape, and that I will be as gay as I can."

"Well said! Now we are growing reasonable, and we shall have a charming little trip. Come, come, ask the questions and you shall be answered."

"Are we going to the Îles Sainte Marguerite?"

"No."

"To the Tour Saint-Jean?"

"No."

"To Pierre-en-Scise?"

"You are warm."

"To the fortress of Dijon?"

"You burn; you burn."

"Then we are going to the Château de Châlon?"

Silence, absolute and prolonged.

"But, answer me now!" cried Roger, impatiently.

"That was not our agreement, my dear monsieur," protested the officer. "I promised to tell you where you are not going, but I am forbidden to tell you where you are going. Suppose that I am compromised by my kindness to you, and that I am compelled to swear that I did not tell you that you were going to the Château de Châlon. In that case, I lift my hand, and give my oath conscientiously, for I have not told you."

"Indeed! Then we are on our way to the Château de Châlon," murmured Roger with a sigh, as he fell back, silent and thoughtful, into the corner of the carriage.

"Come, come!" said the officer. "Here we are, given over to melancholy. We are to have a lively journey, it appears, and two days of it! Ah! I warn you, in the start, that I will not put up with it."

"What!" said Roger, "you will force me to be gay?"

"I have your word, monsieur, and, as a man of honor, you will take pity on a poor officer and live up to it. Why, think of it, I was not born to be an officer; not I. I was meant for a ballad-singer at Turlupin's. Hah! speaking of songs, excellent! I am glad I thought of that. It may cheer you up. Ah! you have composed some droll songs, my dear monsieur!"

"What do you mean?" demanded Roger.

"Good! you are not going to deny it? They were found at your house, and in your handwriting."

"I have no idea of what you mean."

"I see, I see. I am not trying to extract an acknowl-

edgment; but you are of a satirical turn, my dear monsieur."

And the exempt began to sing, to the tune of a popular air: —

"On dit que c'est la Maintenon
Qui renverse le trône,
Et que cette vieille guenon
Nous réduit à l'aumône.
Louis le Grand soutient que non,
La faridondaine, la faridondon,
Et que tout se règle par lui,
Biribi,
A la façon de Barbari,
Mon ami."

["They say that 't is la Maintenon
Doth cause the throne's downfall,
And that that same old harridan
Doth make us beggars all.
But it is not so, says Louis the Great,
La faridondaine, la faridondon,
And I the trouble will regulate,
Biribi,
As they do it in Barbary,
My boy."]

"I was not the author of it!" cried Roger. "I had the misfortune to copy it, that is all."

"And this one?" said the officer.

And he sang again to another tune: —

"Tout ce que fait la Maintenon,
Ne saurait jamais être bon.
Cette vieille sempiternelle,
A donné la guerre au Voisin,
Et je crois que Polichinelle
Aura les finances demain."

["Whatever la Maintenon does, my son,
Is never done as it should be done.
That sempiternal old baboon
Made Voisin Minister of War,
And Master Punch himself eftsoon
Will have the Treasury, I swear."]

"But I tell you," rejoined Roger, "that I did not compose that song either."

"Good! and this one?"

The officer resumed, to a different tune: —

"Ah! ah! ah! Maintenon,
Margoton,
Dit le bon roi,
Laisse-moi,
Car c'est toi
Qui me feras rire
Dans la poêle à frire."

["Ah! ah! ah! Maintenon,
Margoton,
The king, says he,
Don't nag at me,
For can't you see
If you have your way
There 's the devil to pay!"]

"But," cried Roger, "how does it happen that you can sing those songs without being arrested?"

"I am singing them to you, dear monsieur, and to no one else. *Peste!* It would never enter my head to sing them in public nor to copy them in my own hand. Not that I do not find them very droll, and to prove it, as you see, I have not changed a word, heh? Am I wrong? Come, now, if I have made a mistake, do you, as the author, point it out."

"On my honor," replied Roger. "I protest — "

"Hush! No more! Certainly, I will pretend to believe you. Well, no! It was not you. Come, we will say no more about it."

"Oh! luckless wretch that I am!" cried Roger. "Oh! how imprudent I was to sing such things!"

"On the contrary, they must be sung. There is no harm in it; but they must be sung in private, while tête-à-tête, as we are. But copies of them should not be kept at home, and especially copies in one's own handwriting, or, i' faith! a man is liable, if his wife needs to get rid of him. Ah! *dame!* She is so easy to tempt, woman!"

"What!" exclaimed Roger, "do you know of my misfortune, too?"

"What misfortune?"

"Why, in short, what you were just speaking of."

"I! I know nothing," said the officer. "I spoke of that as I might have spoken of anything else."

Then he began humming, —

"On dit que c'est la Maintenon
Qui renverse la trône."

As for Roger, quite overcome by his singular position, and beginning to fear lest his mind should give way in the conflict of ideas besieging him, he closed his eyes, and, resting his head against the side of the carriage, he endeavored to recover somewhat his clearness of mind, while the officer, passing from one song to another, continued to hum the seditious stanzas for which he seemed to entertain especial admiration. However, as Roger had not slept for three nights, in the end he succumbed to sleep, nor did he awake until broad daylight the next morning. He found beside

him, still fresh, alert and smiling, the officer, who inquired with the liveliest interest as to how he had passed the night. As for himself, he asserted that, relying on his prisoner's word, he had enjoyed all the delights of slumber.

Just as they were leaving the carriage for breakfast, he asked Roger if he had any money. Roger was without a sou. They had taken away everything that he possessed, even his jewels, through fear that he might use them to bribe his keepers. The prisoner therefore made humble confession of his poverty.

Thereupon a certain conflict between a good and a bad impulse appeared to be taking place in the officer's mind. But the good impulse won the day.

"Listen, I could keep fifteen sous of the two livres allowed by the king for your meal; but you have been very amiable, you have kept your word. Instead of being extortionate, as certain of my confrères would be, I will give up some of it, and, with your permission, if my company is not too disagreeable, why, we will breakfast together."

"With great pleasure," replied Roger, who, in such matters had never possessed very exaggeratedly aristocratic ideas, and who, moreover, did not care to fall out with his companion.

And they both sat down to the table. As the officer had hoped, the meal was really good. Roger ate like a convalescent twenty years of age.

"What a fine time of life is yours!" remarked the officer, regarding him with envy, notwithstanding that, for his own part, he had come off with some distinction. "What a delightful appetite! Yet I was the same at your age. But I was much gayer, always singing, singing at the top of my voice, with mouth

stretched from morning till night, singing like a lark, like a goldfinch, like a nightingale, but always careful to sing other people's songs, and never my own, unless I was alone with a friend like you. For I used to make songs, too; not so good as yours, perhaps, but they had their merit nevertheless. Listen, now, here is one of them."

And the officer began to sing to an air from "The Chimes:" —

"Tonton, ton temps est passé,
Vieille coquette!
Tonton, ton timbre est cassé,
Vieille pendule! tu répètes,
A soixante ans,
Le carillon de la clochette
Dans son printemps.
Mais, à présent,
Ton tocsin tintant
Ne réveille personne,
Quand sur le tendre ton
Ta grosse cloche sonne,
Non, non, non,
Si l'on t'entend,
Ce n'est qu'au son
De ton argent comptant."

["Tonton, past is thy time,
Old coquette!
Tonton, cracked is thy chime,
Old clock! that dost repeat,
Though past thy prime,
The carillon so sweet
That joy-bells sing
In their spring.
But now, old crone,
Thy wheezy ting-a-ling

Will serve to waken none,
When in its tenderest tone
Thy hoarse old bell doth groan.
Ding, dong, ding,
Whoever is listening,
He listens to the ring
Of thy good hard cash alone."]

"Hey? what do you say to that, my cavalier?" demanded the officer, when he had ended and had allowed Roger a moment's silence in which to appraise his verse.

"Why, I say," replied Roger, "that you are very imprudent to sing such things."

"Why so?"

"What if I were to denounce you?"

"Bah! who would believe you? I should say that you wanted to take revenge for my strictness, and it would all recoil on you."

During the night they arrived at the Château de Châlon-sur-Saône.

Roger was conducted forthwith to the room assigned to him; but, as he was very tired from the journey, and very much weakened by his recent wound, which was not yet healed, he cast himself on his bed without even looking to see what his room was like.

He remarked merely that it was lighted by a lamp hanging from the ceiling, and this attention pleased him.

XXIV.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM BECOMES AS WISE AND AS WARY AS HAD BEEN THE LATE COMTE D'OLIBARUS.

WHEN Roger first awoke, he saw the lamp still burning. Thereupon, thinking that it was not yet day, he turned his face to the wall and again fell asleep.

But the next time that he awoke, he wondered at the delay of sunrise, and gazed about him. Then the terrible truth dawned upon him. He was in a cell without windows. The lamp, whose light he had hailed as a blessing, was henceforth his only sun. A revolving dumb-waiter, designed to serve his meals, contained the breakfast, — proof positive that the day was already advanced.

Ah, then! Brave as Roger was, his misfortunes bore heavily upon his soul and rent his breast. He sat down on his bed, his arms listless, asking himself what he had done to God or man to be thus abandoned by the one and maltreated by the other.

He sat thus in the deepest dejection for a period whose duration he was incapable of reckoning. Only his dumb-waiter moved, turned, and came back laden with his dinner in place of the breakfast that had returned as intact as it had come.

Yet, in the midst of this profound grief by which Roger was crushed, nature, ever exacting, claimed her rights. Roger was hungry. Roger was thirsty. Me-

chanically approaching the dummy, he ate and drank as a thirsty, starving animal would have done. Then, with a slow and regular tread, he began to range the limits of his room like a wild beast in a cage.

The hours rolled on unmarked by change of daylight and darkness. The days went by without his hearing a single rumor. Roger's sole distraction was the sound made by the turning of the dumb-waiter when his meals were served, or the motion of his lamp as it disappeared through the ceiling for a supply of oil and a new wick.

But the hand that caused the dummy to creak and the lamp to ascend remained invisible. Once or twice Roger addressed the unknown agent, asking the day or the hour, not for the sake of knowing either, but simply to hear the sound of a human voice. But never did his questions win the slightest response, and the prisoner very soon ceased to repeat attempts whose futility he recognized.

At first he was beside himself with despair. Then exhaustion succeeded despair. Sometimes he slept twelve hours at a stretch. He either sprawled like a brute or sat stock-still like an idiot.

He once hoped that he was going mad; and at the thought he burst into wild shouts of laughter.

But he was not so fortunate. As a stone cast into a pool momentarily troubles the water and sends the mire to its surface, so had rage and despair filled Roger's brain at the blow received in his heart. But just as the water gradually becomes pure and pellucid, the prisoner's brain grew calm, and, after a month of this captivity, a casual glance would have led one to think him subdued and almost resigned.

The truth was, the bitterness which had at first

rankled in his mind had gradually been precipitated, and it filled his heart.

Then the appearance of resignation came upon him. He looked as if he lived like any one else. His mind grew active with repose of body, his ideas were reorganized. By dint of studying his situation he caught glimpses of a thousand confused possibilities of which, when outside, at liberty and among people, his mind, diverted by exterior objects, would never have permitted him to suspect even the existence.

He went back over his life day by day, hour by hour, almost minute by minute, from the day on which he became Sylvandire's husband to the hour of his arrest at Cours-la-Reine. He reviewed the brief love that Sylvandire had seemed to entertain for him, but which was merely the physical attraction that a woman feels for the first man that has caused her to experience unknown sensations. He saw that false love gradually disappear and make way for indifference. Then he recognized the springing up of the first symptoms of the dislike to which Sylvandire had since sacrificed him. These symptoms had followed close upon Monsieur de Royancourt's appearance at the Hôtel d'Anguilhem. This dislike was very soon reenforced by that which Sylvandire conceived for her husband's intimates. From that time strife was established between those two natures so dissimilar. Both had summoned their natural allies. Roger had called in Cretté, d'Herbigny, Clos-Renaud, and hosts of true-hearted gentlemen, who had at first counselled an open and aggressive war, and later a wise retreat. Sylvandire had called to her aid the Marquis de Royancourt, Monsieur Bouteau, without doubt, and the Jesuit, Letellier. Probably they had resorted to tortuous measures, to underhanded sub-

terfuges, to evil machinations, and they had succeeded. Roger was now in their toils, bound hand and foot, held under an accusation that had nothing to do with the real cause of his arrest. His imprisonment would last as long as Monsieur de Royancourt's passion, love, or fancy endured for Sylvandire, and perhaps longer; for, to their dread of the wronged husband's accusation would be added fear of the injured prisoner's vengeance. His detention, then, might be indefinitely prolonged, either because the love with which Sylvandire inspired the marquis might defy time, or because the fear with which Roger inspired Monsieur de Royancourt might prove stronger than remorse.

Then, too, Roger analyzed his own conduct with the same attention to details that he had just exercised in the analysis of that of others, and he discovered a thousand ways, under the same conditions, of avoiding all the misfortunes that had befallen him.

"Yes," said Roger to himself, "yes, I have been nothing but a fool. I should have done as do so many husbands that I know who are happy and respected, and are at this moment walking up and down the streets of Paris in the full enjoyment of their liberty. I should have shut my eyes, and taken up with Mademoiselle Poussette, as Cretté advised me. Decidedly, the others were all men of sense. As for me, I am a fool.

"Instead of being a poor prisoner as I now am, I should be the colonel of a regiment. I should have to mortify the flesh three days in the week, it is true. But on other days, in some very elegant, commodious, retired little house of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, I should be living on the fat of the land with mistress and friends. The king would bestow on me his blandest smile. I should kiss the dry hand of Madame de

Maintenon once a week. I should pay court to Père Letellier. I might hold a duke's patent, be a peer of France, perhaps.

"Ah! really I am a fool.

"But, no! no! a hundred times no! I did what I should have done. I did what I would do again. Honor is everything in this world, and there is but one way of looking at it. Besides, I loved that woman, not with my heart, — my heart has always belonged to poor Constance, — but I loved her with pride. I loved her because she was beautiful, perhaps also because I have done much for her, perhaps because she owed everything to me. But however that may be, I loved her, in short. I should not, I could not, have allowed her to be taken from me. I did therefore just as I should have done, and not I am the fool. The fools are they who are branded with infamy.

"But, let me be free for one day and I will avenge myself! Ah! when will that be?"

That was the question.

At For-l'Évêque Roger had told himself that if his liberty were restored to him he would pardon all. At the Bastile he had made a few mental reservations. At Châlon he told himself that he was twenty-two years old, and the king was seventy-five. That, granting the king ten years to live, that is, until he was eighty-five, it was all that a crowned head, however exacting, could demand. Then, the king being dead, the prisons would be thrown open. At the very worst, therefore, Roger would leave prison at thirty-two.

Now Roger asked himself which he would prefer, to leave prison at that very moment and have no revenge, or to leave in ten years and take his revenge quite at his ease.

Roger answered that he would prefer to leave prison in ten years and avenge himself like an able-bodied man.

So at the end of three months of isolation and seclusion, Roger had become a deep thinker, a consummate politician, a Machiavelli of the first rank.

At times, could a person have looked in upon him, he would have been seen sitting on his stool with his legs crossed, his elbow on his knee, his chin in his hand, his gaze fixed, and a smile on his lips. Such a person might then have supposed that Roger was dreaming of his father, his mother, Mademoiselle de Beuzerie, the beautiful days of his youth, or of some pleasant memory.

No, Roger was dreaming of vengeance.

Eleven months thus rolled away, the prisoner's heart never despairing, his courage never failing him. His sunburnt face may have whitened somewhat during this long night; his Herculean outlines were reduced by fasting; but the pallor lent him an air that he had lacked, and the falling-off gave him an elegance that one had vainly sought in him. Roger remained strong and handsome; but Roger was becoming a hypocrite.

Every night he prayed aloud for the king's length of days and for Madame de Maintenon's; because, you see, eyes might be watching what he did, ears perhaps were listening to what he said. True, at the bottom of his heart and in the same breath he sent them all to the devil; but that was inwardly, and only God and himself knew anything about it.

One morning as he was gnawing at a crust of bread that was serving as his breakfast, the door of his cell opened. A voice that he recognized reached his ear. His eyes, accustomed to the darkness, — for often he

went hours, whole days, even, without any one's thinking to relight his expired lamp, — distinguished a superbly dressed gentleman, who advanced two or three steps and spoke his name.

It was Monsieur de Royancourt coming with outstretched arms to meet Roger.

Roger seized his stool and raised it with the intention of breaking Monsieur de Royancourt's head. His enemy stood before him. He had but to drop his massive arm to annihilate him. Roger reflected, flung the stool on the bed, and ran toward the Marquis de Royancourt with open arms.

Thanks to the obscurity in which he was enveloped, the threatening gesture, which in his first impulse had escaped him, passed unobserved.

These two men, who mortally hated each other, pressed heart to heart like friends, like brothers.

"You are here, then, my dear Anguilhem!" exclaimed the marquis, drawing him outside. "Ah! how long we searched without finding you!"

In spite of his presence of mind, Roger was astounded at such boldness; but he concealed his amazement beneath the smile that he had practised, accepted the hand that Monsieur de Royancourt extended to draw him from his cell, and following his lead while effusively pressing his hand, he reached a room belonging to the governor's apartment.

Passing in front of a mirror, Roger hardly knew himself. His beard was long, his hair bristling, and his clothes hung in rags.

He smiled at himself with the same smile that he had bestowed on Monsieur de Royancourt.

"You are free, my dear Monsieur d'Anguilhem," said the marquis. "But, *mon Dieu!* how does it

happen that we have had no news of you for these fifteen months? However, we will speak of all that later. Let us be off now as expeditiously as possible."

"The most expeditious way, my dear liberator, my friend, my brother," said Roger, "would be, I think, to ascertain from monsieur le gouverneur, whether I am really free, — a thing I cannot yet believe."

"You are free, my dear chevalier, thanks to our entreaties," returned the marquis.

"Believe that I am truly grateful. I should say, then, that the first thing to do would be to ascertain whether monsieur le gouverneur would kindly lend me a room, order a bath, and send for a tailor and a hairdresser."

"Of course, my dear chevalier, you shall have all that, with the exception of the tailor, who is not needed. I foresaw your destitution, and I have in my chaise some clothes that I brought from your hôtel. They shall be laid out for you; and at the same time, if you will permit, my valet shall attend you."

"You overwhelm me, my dear marquis; but I accept. It is delightful to owe everything to you."

Roger was conducted to a room, a bath was brought him, and, while he was in the bath, Monsieur de Royancourt's valet shaved him and dressed his hair.

Then, on emerging from his bath, Roger made his toilet.

Not before did he himself perceive the change that had taken place in him. The one quality formerly wanting in Roger had been refinement of mien, that distinctive mark of breeding. Fasting and perhaps reflection had lent him that refinement. Roger was now a finished cavalier.

Monsieur de Royancourt was himself astonished at

sight of him. There was a look of power in the man which he had never seen, and it made him shudder. Resolution shone in his eye. For the first time Monsieur de Royancourt thought of how much the man had to fear who had Roger for an enemy.

The governor desired to detain the gentlemen to breakfast; but Roger smilingly answered that the governor doubtless forgot that his own had been served just before Monsieur de Royancourt had entered his cell. The governor stammered a few excuses, falling back on the rigid rules of the institution which would not permit him to show his guests all the attentions that were sometimes their due. Roger thereupon replied, with his unfailing smile, that, as for himself, he could not complain, so thoroughly well treated had he been.

The chaise stood before the entrance. Post-horses were attached. Monsieur de Royancourt and Roger entered, and the carriage departed at full speed.

It was with deepest ecstasy that Roger, oppressed for eleven months by the noisome air of a cell, inhaled the pure, balmy air of the month of May. It was with inexpressible happiness that Roger beheld, instead of the gloomy boundary of four walls, the landscape with its wide plains and distant blue mountains, but all this pleasure, all this enjoyment was confined within. He was as impenetrable in his happiness as in his hatred, and he looked again upon this nature that he so loved with the same smile with which he looked at the man he so hated.

And from time to time he answered the other's questions with an affectionate glance or a friendly tone, and renewed his assurances of gratitude and devotion.

At last the conversation, marked for a time on the marquis' side by a certain embarrassment of which he

was not quite master, and on Roger's by an emotion that he had not power entirely to stifle, assumed a more even tone.

Roger summoned up all his courage, steadied his voice, and asked for news of Sylvandire.

"Alas! poor woman!" returned Monsieur de Royancourt. "You have caused her great sorrow, and you owe her great amends."

"Ah!" murmured Roger, "indeed!"

"Unquestionably," answered Monsieur de Royancourt. "At first, although you had threatened to leave her, she would not believe in your departure, and thought it only a joke. But when she saw one, two, three days go by without your return, she was indeed obliged to succumb before the evidence. Then she became almost demented. For a week there was nothing but sighs and tears. Finally, she went to Monsieur d'Argenson to find out where you were. Monsieur d'Argenson knew only that you were no longer in France. As you may suppose, at this news her despair increased, and one fine day, on presenting himself at your house, her father learned that she had set out that very morning to discover and to rejoin you wherever you might be. For three months no one knew what had become of her, poor woman! And the king, who knows everything that happens in his realm, learning of this adventure, declared that you were a bad husband, a wicked example, and ordered that you should be arrested."

"Good and excellent king!" cried the chevalier most earnestly.

"Then it was that the search was made at your house when the unfortunate verses were found which have caused all the trouble."

"And which I sincerely repent having preserved. For you do not think me capable of such ingratitude as to be the author of them, do you?"

"Oh! I have never thought so. It was in that conviction that I pleaded your cause."

"My deliverer!" cried the chevalier, grasping both hands of Monsieur de Royancourt. "But let us return to Sylvandire, I beg."

"Well, my dear friend, Sylvandire arrived in London after you. She learned that you had just set out for France. She followed you. At Dover she was a day too late; at Calais, two hours."

"Dear Sylvandire!" murmured the chevalier with the most conjugal emphasis.

"At Calais she learned of your departure for Paris, and, without losing a moment, without stopping to rest, much as she must have needed to do so, she also set out, hoping to overtake you on the way; but her hope was deceived. Not having overtaken you, she hoped to find you at the hotel, and she sat up all night without rest, because she looked for you to arrive at any moment; but you did not come. Judge of her grief!"

"Ah, marquis, marquis, you torture my soul!" cried Roger, as he wiped his eyes with his handkerchief. "What then? Continue. And I could suspect such a wife! ah, you are right, marquis; I am guilty. What next did she do? What next?"

"Well," resumed the marquis, deceived by the naturalness with which Roger played his part, "what could you expect me to tell you after that? Her days were spent in grief, in tears; for you did not appear, and we did not know what had become of you."

"You did not know that I was in prison? Well, on my word of honor, I suspected as much."

"Oh! *mon Dieu!* no, we did not know it. Monsieur d'Argenson, dreading to be solicited by Madame d'Anguilhem, or forced by me, whom he knew to have influence, Monsieur d'Argenson apprised us of your imprisonment only about a fortnight ago. And then, as you may suppose, Sylvandire took the field. Monsieur de Bouteau and I, for our parts, did likewise, and we have so begged and entreated and besought Madame de Maintenon, so encompassed the king, that we have at last obtained your pardon. Ah! my dear Anguilhem," added the marquis feelingly, "ah! how we have suffered!"

"And all that time I was accusing you of lukewarmness. Ah! wretch, ingrate that I am! You have pardoned me; but do you think that she will ever pardon me, marquis?"

"A woman's soul is a treasury of indulgence," replied the marquis. "Hope, then, my dear chevalier."

"And now that you have reassured me somewhat upon that point, a word of my parents, my dear marquis. My conjugal affection, you see, has caused me to forget filial affection. The baron and the baroness are in good health, I trust?"

"Yes, thank God! and, through your wife's forethought, they are both notified that you are about to return from a long journey; for they, like us, were ignorant of your captivity."

"Thoughtful Sylvandire! And our acquaintances, d'Herbigny, Clos-Renaud, Crettè?"

The last name escaped Roger carelessly rather than deliberately.

The marquis was caught by the careless manner.

"Why, as you know," he returned, "I see little of your friends, who pass at court for libertines, haunting

the Palais Royal. I believe, however, that they are well, especially Monsieur de Cretté, with whom I regret having had some differences; but, thank heaven, everything is adjusted between us."

"Ah, indeed! You have had differences on account of Madame de Maintenon? Of course it is wrong of Cretté not to admire that noble, that saintly woman. But, as you have just remarked, the man is dissolute, an associate, I believe, of Broglié, La Fare, and Canilhac."

"All lost souls!" declared Monsieur de Royancourt, clasping his hands with an air of compassion.

"Supposing them to have any," said Roger.

Monsieur de Royancourt made a sign of misgiving, and for a time there was a lull in the conversation.

Roger was delighted with himself. He had just put into practice the rules which his fifteen months of prison life had taught him. He saw that he had duped Monsieur de Royancourt, and he hoped to deceive his wife as he had deceived the marquis.

With slight variations, the remainder of the journey was abridged by conversations of the same sort. The travellers journeyed day and night, halting at Auxerre and stopping only for a moment at Fontainebleau.

At last they reached Paris.

Roger saw For-l'Évêque in the distance, and rode along the foot of the walls of the Bastile.

Ten minutes later they were at the gates of the Hôtel d'Anguílhem.

Evidently Roger was expected. The entire household had been apprised, and were drawn up to receive him. On entering the court of the hôtel, Roger saw lackeys at all the doors, and his wife at the window.

He leaped from the coach, and hastened toward the

salon. Sylvandire, followed by Monsieur Bouteau, advanced to meet him, so that he encountered her at the door.

At that moment, beyond the calmly hypocritical face of his wife, Roger caught sight of the portraits of his father and mother smiling at him from their frames. Then, seared as his heart was by fifteen months of imprisonment, the tears sprang to his eyes at sight of the only friends on whom man can rely.

His emotion was so overpowering that Roger fainted.

Sylvandire could possibly have thought, and she doubtless did think, that his love for her and his joy at seeing her again had deprived the chevalier of his senses.

XXV.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM SET FIRE TO HIS HÔTEL TO FIND OUT WHETHER HE WAS OR WAS NOT WHAT HE FEARED.

THREE days after the scene we have just described, a spectacle patriarchal to behold was afforded by the Hôtel d'Anguilhem, thanks to Maître Bouteau's charming cordiality, to Sylvandire's extravagant caresses, to Monsieur de Royancourt's eager sympathy, and to Roger's hypocrisy.

All these people appeared to love one another according to the apostolic injunction.

Now, as we view everything in this world merely on the surface, we all allow ourselves to be deceived by it, even when self-interest requires us to sound the depths of other people's motives. Even Roger, finding himself enveloped by such tender affection whichever way he looked or turned, was occasionally conscious of doubt in his heart.

Cretté, unfortunately, had been absent from Paris about eight days. Roger had secretly gone to his house and arranged with little Basque that as soon as his master returned Roger should be told.

Meanwhile Sylvandire was unable to be demonstrative enough toward her husband. She asked him how he spent his time in prison, and if he sometimes thought of her.

Roger assured her that the prison was a very pleasant abode; that the jailers made very attentive servants;

that he dined every day at the governor's table; that he went out with him in his carriage every afternoon, and that they played at ombre or checkers together every evening, after which, with every possible mark of respect, he was shown to a pretty room whose only defects consisted of a door with two bolts and a window with four bars. The chevalier feared that if he told Sylvandire the real state of the case, she must understand that a man who had suffered so much had much to avenge.

As to thinking of her, Roger fondly assured Sylvandire that he had done nothing else from morning until night, and from night until morning. In this instance, we know that Roger told the exact truth.

Then Sylvandire in turn assured Roger that she found him very much improved, and that prison life had wonderfully agreed with him.

One morning, little Basque came and told Roger that the Marquis de Cretté had returned half an hour before.

Roger left his hôtel on foot, took a carriage at the corner of the street, and proceeded to the Hôtel Cretté. The marquis was expecting him. The two friends cast themselves into each other's arms.

Cretté had learned much of what had happened to Roger, and particularly the details of his two escapes and the injuries resulting therefrom. But the marquis was ignorant of the solitary confinement, the sunless cell, the torture of living days that cannot be reckoned, and last, the firm resolution taken by Roger to be revenged upon his wife, if, as he believed, his wife had been concerned in his imprisonment.

Cretté could but repeat what he had written of Sylvandire's disappearance, his own quarrel with

Monsieur de Royancourt, and his certainty that the wife herself had brought to light the unfortunate songs that had been, if not the cause of his imprisonment, at least the pretext for it.

As to Roger's release, it was due, as the prisoner had suspected, to the persistent efforts of Cretté, d'Herbigny, and Chastellux, especially of the last, who was distantly related to Monsieur d'Argenson through the women of the family, — a relationship which he had until then almost denied, and to which he began to lay claim as soon as it was likely to prove serviceable to Roger. Yet, when Monsieur de Royancourt found matters so far advanced that there were no means left of prolonging Roger's captivity, from persecutor as he had been, he became defender, and, as his influence was real, he had hastened the prisoner's release.

The rest is known.

All that Cretté told his friend accorded so well with what he had twenty times repeated to himself, that he did not for a moment doubt that they had arrived at a most accurate estimate of cause and effect.

Realizing that they must meet only on urgent occasion, the two friends parted with renewed assurances of their undying friendship which, for that matter, had been sufficiently tested for them to be able to count upon each other.

Yet, for the entire acquittal of his conscience, morally convinced though Roger was, he wished to gain possession of material proofs that would admit of no appeal on the part of the voice of doubt, which, at the bottom of his heart, still clamored at times. "Perhaps — "

In his cell he had learned to think without speaking. Thus far, he had put into faithful practice the enforced

lesson. No one had a suspicion of what was passing in the depths of his soul. He began, therefore, to act.

He summoned Breton.

Breton was a faithful servant and one on whom he could rely.

Questioned as to Monsieur de Royancourt, Breton replied that during the chevalier's absence the marquis had come every day to the hôtel, and that his visits had ceased only on the day of Madame d'Anguilhem's disappearance.

Now it became clear to Roger that, had his dear wife cherished the laudable purpose of setting out to find him, she would not have failed to inform her household, whereas, Monsieur de Royancourt himself had admitted to Roger that, on going away, Sylvandire had said nothing to any one.

Madame d'Anguilhem had, a month before vanishing, dismissed a maid that had served her for ten years. To Roger this seemed very suspicious, since Mademoiselle Clarisse was a person whose faithfulness and efficiency were too remarkable for her to be sent away without reason, and on the eve of undertaking alone a fatiguing journey.

Roger hoped to extract something from Sylvandire herself; but when, hypocrite even in love, he in turn tried to learn from his wife how she had employed her time in his absence, there were endless affectations and coquettish refusals to tell. It was substantially impossible to prove that she had resided in any place whatever. Sylvandire merely admitted having spent two months in the Convent des Filles-Dieu, which, it is true, was a convent widely renowned for the austerity of its rules, but one where Monsieur de Royancourt, Madame de Maintenon's friend, came and went at will,

his sister being the superior and his cousin the treasurer of the convent aforesaid.

To seek information at the Filles-Dieu would be proclaiming aloud his distrust; hence Roger signified his faith in all that was told him, and in turn assured Sylvandire that convent life had greatly enhanced her beauty. They continued, withal, to live as a model household. More frequently than ever Roger greeted Monsieur Bouteau with the affectionate appellation of father-in-law, and heaped upon Monsieur de Royancourt the most friendly courtesies.

Those of his friends who did not know, as Cretté did, that all this tenderness concealed something enigmatical, mysterious, tragic perhaps, sneered not a little when the conversation turned upon the young couple's unsophisticated fondness for each other. Nor in certain circles, as will readily be understood, did they fail to make merry at the expense of Madame d'Anguilhem, the virtuous Penelope who, instead of awaiting her Ulysses, had gone in search of him, no one knew where, but certainly where he was not.

Meanwhile Roger had given Breton full power, and charged him to bribe any of Monsieur de Royancourt's people. One morning, while attending his master, Breton announced that the marquis' coachman, whom his master had ill-treated the day before, had consented to speak, for the sum of one hundred louis. Breton advised the chevalier to take advantage of the momentary dissatisfaction.

The chevalier followed Breton's advice. He sent the coachman a hundred louis, and this is what he learned the same day from the mouth of the knave himself.

Beginning with the date of Sylvandire's departure,

Monsieur de Royancourt had every night after supper visited the little hamlet of Luzarches, sometimes on horseback, sometimes by carriage. He spent four or five hours there; and regularly at two o'clock in the morning, he took the road back to Paris, where he arrived at four. He then went to bed and feigned not to have been away from home. By way of additional precaution, his carriage returned to the hôtel at midnight, and the household — with the exception of the coachman who knew that he sent the carriage back empty, and the valet de chambre who sat up for Monsieur de Royancourt until four o'clock in the morning — supposed that the master had returned.

Roger was on their track. He resolved to follow to the other extremity this clew, of which he held one end in his hand. Consequently, he set off himself for Luzarches.

There he began his inquiries, and learned that a young woman had come and established herself in a house in which she lived alone. A nun attended her. A man, whose name they did not know, but who was of very distinguished appearance, came to see her every evening. Sylvandire was described with absolute accuracy, and the portrait of Monsieur de Royancourt was so like him that there was no mistaking it.

Another than Roger would have made a disturbance, would have challenged Monsieur de Royancourt to a duel, or had him assassinated by a couple of ruffians in some corner. But for the disturbance, there was For-l'Évêque, for the duel, the Bastile, and for the assassination, a mode of vengeance, which, however, did not even enter Roger's head, — there was the rack.

All that, therefore, was no revenge, since such

revenge brought its own punishment. What Roger required was a revenge that left him free, happy, and yet avenged.

Besides, his hatred was concentrated especially upon Sylvandire. It was Sylvandire who had betrayed him; it was Sylvandire whom he had loved; it was Sylvandire who had given him a moment's happiness; it was Sylvandire whom he hated so cruelly that he feared he loved her still.

From the hour that Roger had resolved upon revenge, he had determined what that revenge should be. He therefore returned to the plan stored in a corner of his brain, where he had placed it for use when the time came. His soul, it must be said, from the date of his release from prison, was nothing else than a stormy sea whose vast waves rose high and died away. Like tempests brooded his thoughts, athwart which, from time to time, gleamed a good motive with lightning-like flash, but as quickly also it expired.

Now sure of his unhappiness, now certain of having been duped, he felt strong and considered himself justified.

It was necessary, first of all, that Roger should ascertain to a certainty that he no longer loved this accursed woman, lest the execution of his project should be arrested by one of those heart pangs that are mistaken for twinges of conscience. We have said, and we repeat, that Roger so hated Sylvandire as not yet to be sure that he did not love her.

Therefore, one by one, he analyzed his feelings toward Sylvandire.

When he came upon her without warning, there was a keen shock of the heart, a deep pain, a sudden chill, something like the cold sensation of a lancet's blade

piercing a vein. At such times, in spite of his self-control, Roger grew pale, and the blood rushed back upon his heart. The next moment his gorged heart would expel the blood with such violence as to cause a giddiness that made him think he was about to be ill. Yet, in the midst of all these sensations, so varied, so conflicting, so convulsive, he must live his ordinary life, must converse indifferently, must smile graciously. It was torture more cruel perhaps than that of the prison at Châlon-sur-Saône.

Sometimes, in the middle of the night, startled out of a dream in which he thought himself still a prisoner on a wretched pallet in an infectious cell, Roger would wake with bounding heart, panting breast, and his hair standing on end, to find himself softly couched under silken canopies in a room voluptuously lighted by an alabaster lamp, and there, sleeping tranquilly beside him, would be Sylvandire, that glowing siren, that enticing enchantress, who, under a marvellous exterior, concealed such a hideous entity. Then he would rise on his rigid arm, gaze at her with eyes fixed, searching, and deadly, and recall that story of Galland's, which had just appeared and was creating such a furor, the tale of a man who had married a vampire, and who saw her return to the conjugal couch after her monstrous feast in a graveyard.

Meanwhile, Sylvandire was dreaming a pleasant dream, breathing an amorous sigh, and disclosing in a voluptuous smile the white enamelled teeth beneath her coral lips.

Then would Roger be seized with a fierce desire to stifle the woman in a loving embrace, and receive with his own mouth her last sigh, that, her life having been another's, her death, at least, should be his. But he

carried out only the first part of his design. His heart failed him for the second.

As for Sylvandire, so confident was she of her power over Roger that her days were happy and her nights peaceful. Never had she chanced to surprise the fierce look that enveloped and held her unwittingly; but, it must be said, never by word or gesture did Roger betray himself.

Monsieur de Royancourt continued to visit the hôtel; but he was visibly becoming disenchanted.

"Naturally," said Roger to himself, following up the cooling process as he had followed the course of their love, "naturally, possession has brought indifference."

And he redoubled his own attentions to Sylvandire, who, on her side, impelled by a sense of guilt, returned her husband's caresses with forced ones in such measure that, aside from the madness of revenge by which he was possessed, Roger was really quite happy.

Sylvandire was very guarded, and yet it one day happened that, tired of having waited in vain expectation of Monsieur de Royancourt for nearly a whole week, without his deigning to send her even a message, she wrote a very reproachful little note, and rang for one of her own people to have it sent by her confidential attendant.

But Madame d'Anguilhem's servants had gone out, and it was Breton that answered her bell. As Sylvandire was holding the letter in her hand, she dared not postpone sending it. Besides, Breton announced himself as quite unoccupied at the time, and suggested to Madame d'Anguilhem that he himself undertake her commission. To refuse was, plainly, to give the valet grounds for suspicion. She put on a bold face, therefore, handed Breton the letter, and said indifferently,—

"To be taken immediately to the Marquis de Royancourt."

Breton was ascending to change his dress when he met his master on the stairs. He therefore displayed the letter of which he was the bearer, with a questioning glance as to whether he should carry it to its destination.

Roger was about to yield to temptation and take it, when he heard behind a door the rustle of a satin robe. He knew that Sylvandire was spying.

"A letter from madame to Monsieur de Royancourt," said the valet.

"Very well; deliver it at once," answered Roger, "and say to the marquis for me that it is unkind of him thus to neglect us; that I have not seen him for eight days; that I am highly indignant at such indifference, and that I forgive him only on the condition that he comes to dine with us this very day."

"But, monsieur," said Breton.

"Quite right, quite right, go, my friend, go," pursued Roger. "I am not needing you at present."

Then he descended ten or twelve steps, and, to Breton's great amazement, entered Sylvandire's room.

"It was very good of you, my dear," said he, as he drew down his ruffles, and arranged the folds of his jabot, "very good of you to send for dear Royancourt. I wish him to taste the roe that my father has sent us from Anguilhem."

Sylvandire, who, in this brief space, had turned red, white, yellow, all the colors of the rainbow in short, collected her wits and resumed her smile.

"What a delightful husband I have!" thought she, kissing Roger on both cheeks.

"What a weak master I have the misfortune to

serve!" said Breton to himself. "Would any one suppose this to be the same gentleman that gave Monsieur de Kollinski such a terrible sword-thrust at his first affair? Mere luck!"

At dinner-time, Monsieur de Royancourt was announced. The double invitation that he had received had touched him undoubtedly, for he was excessively friendly. As for Sylvandire, she was radiant. Roger observed them not too closely, was witty without being caustic, and animated without seeming forced.

At dessert, he surprised some very expressive glances exchanged between his wife and their guest.

Soon after they had risen from the table, and as they were passing into the salon for coffee, he saw the marquis, who was escorting Sylvandire from the one room to the other, slip a note into her hand. Sylvandire concealed it in her bosom.

"Shameless woman, impudent rascal!" muttered Roger. "I could kill them both where they stand!"

But he controlled himself, and only a lace frill at his wrist was the worse for it. He tore it into bits.

He must secure that note. It was a very difficult thing to accomplish, but a very essential one. Roger thought about it the entire evening; then he believed he had found a way.

The success of his scheme depended on calculating the probable moment when Sylvandire would seek to learn the contents of the note.

"It will undoubtedly be this evening at her toilet," he said to himself.

During the whole evening he did not for an instant lose sight of Sylvandire. He assured himself that she had not had a moment in which to read the billet in question, and, after Monsieur de Royancourt had gone,

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CIRCULATING DEPARTMENT.

he concealed himself in the salon adjoining his wife's dressing-room. He then listened until he heard her enter, and when he divined that she must be in the act of reading, he set fire to the curtains at one of the windows. Quickly the flames leaped to the ceiling, and a few panes of glass broke.

"Fire! fire!" shouted Roger.

And he rushed headlong into the boudoir.

Sylvandire still held Monsieur de Royancourt's note in her hand. She made a movement to hide it; but, on seeing the wreaths of flame and smoke that filled the salon, she drew back, gave a shriek, and lost consciousness.

Roger opened her fingers, while the salon burned, and rapidly read as follows: —

"Let us forget the past, Sylvandire; often have I repented of what we have done. As for your proposition, to flee together and leave France, it is madness, and I reject it; besides, I begin to be ashamed of deceiving, as we are doing, an honest man who overwhelms me with kindnesses. Therefore, if you take my advice, Sylvandire, we shall sever all connection. You say that you are dying for love of me; live for the husband who adores you, it would be more Christian-like."

"Well, well, you twofold idiot!" said Roger to himself. "Will you now hesitate?"

And he replaced the note in Sylvandire's hand, still cold and lifeless. Then, closing the door of the boudoir, he rang for Breton.

The fire had consumed the curtains, caught in the window-ledge, and scorched the wainscoting; but, no longer finding easily assimilated food at hand, it licked its feeble tongues along the casings and curled about the wooden balustrades.

The entire hôtel was on foot in an instant, and ten minutes later there was neither fire nor smoke.

Quite alone, Sylvandire came to herself, recognized that she was in her boudoir, found the note crumpled in her hand, believed that Roger had discovered nothing, and, quite jubilant at having escaped safe and sound from the doubly threatening disaster, issued forth to mingle with the workers.

As soon as Roger saw her, he hastened to her side.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!* my darling Sylvandire, what a misfortune! Your room is quite spoiled. It was so fresh, so bright! The repairing will debar us from receiving for a month at least."

"Well, my dear," said Sylvandire in the sweetest of tones, "let us go to Champigny."

"To Champigny?" repeated Roger.

"Yes. Do you dread the memories the place will recall?"

Roger opened his mouth to say, "And why not to Luzarches?" but he checked himself.

"Assuredly not," he said aloud. "And you know how precious to my heart are the memories that would recur to me in the house that you have rendered so dear; but to my mind, if you were as given to adventure as you are adorable, we would take a thousand pistoles and go off by ourselves, like two fond lovers, on a visit to that beautiful Provence whose airs you sing so marvellously to your harpsichord."

"Oh! my dear," said Sylvandire, making a charming little face, "would not such a journey be too long?"

"Very well, very well, dear! Let us say no more about it; it shall be just as you wish."

But Sylvandire was too pleased at having escaped

detection to be obstinate in her refusal. Besides, she decided that by going away she was likely to wound the pride of Monsieur de Royancourt who had just wounded her love, and, as she desired to avenge herself on the faithless one, she returned to Roger's proposition.

"No, dear, no," said she. "I will not deprive you nor deprive myself of such a pleasure; and besides, I have resolved to devote myself to pleasing you. Command, then, I am yours to obey."

Roger restrained the triumphant joy that filled his breast. He made all his preparations; but, notwithstanding the haste he made, Monsieur de Royancourt and Sylvandire were reconciled during the interval.

Hence, one fine morning, the marquis proposed to the chevalier and his wife that he should accompany them to Provence.

This was not to Roger's mind. Nevertheless, he appeared to hail Monsieur de Royancourt's proposition with delight; but he invented a business pretext, by means of which he postponed their departure.

He hoped that meanwhile a fresh quarrel would arise which would bring about another falling out.

He was not deceived.

Roger intercepted a second note from Monsieur de Royancourt, in which he announced to Sylvandire that, in order that their rupture might not this time be subject to the usual opportunities for reconciliation, he was on the very eve of departure for Utrecht.

Sylvandire endeavored in vain to conceal her vexation. Roger could follow its progress in her face and heart.

On the very day of Monsieur de Royancourt's departure for Holland, she first resumed the subject of their journey through Provence.

"Oh! on my soul," groaned Roger within himself. "I am playing the most ridiculous and the most revolting of all rôles; but, thank God! we are nearing the end."

He then seized with alacrity upon his wife's overture, and, as every preparation had long before been completed, on the next day, the first of June, 1713, the young couple left Paris, as loving, apparently, as two turtle-doves.

XXVI.

HOW ROGER AND SYLVANDIRE MADE A CHARMING EXCURSION TO PROVENCE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

ROGER had played his little part so well, in the words of King Charles IX. of Catholic memory, that up to the very moment of his departure everybody was talking of his love for his wife. Every one took him seriously, even d'Herbigny, even Clos-Renaud, even Chastellux, and it was said on all sides that, although the king had been unable to regulate Richelieu's household by means of the Bastile, the Château de Châlon-sur-Saône had served the great monarch's ideas of matrimony a better turn in the case of the Chevalier d'Anguilhem.

Even Cretté himself was his friend's dupe, and gave credence to the public rumor. He knew what a beautiful and persevering woman could accomplish, and, whenever he saw Mademoiselle Poussette, he recommended her to study Sylvandire as the model of a great coquette.

"Look at his wild schemes of vengeance,—all still-born," he said. "Poor Roger! he wished to kill everybody, and here he is now doing anything but that. However, perhaps it is the wisest course; but certainly the chevalier's example will not lead me to surrender my liberty."

While all Paris was engaged in conversation of this sort, Roger and his wife were on their way to the South; two days after setting out they were passing through Châlon. The chevalier desired to observe what effect the sight of the prison in which he had been confined

would have on his wife. He therefore conducted her to the castle walls.

"Well," demanded Sylvandire, after having two or three times looked first at the walls and then at him, "why do you wish me to see this horrible building?"

"Because it is where I spent eleven months while you were searching all the world over for me, darling," answered Roger.

Sylvandire made a charming little *moue* which meant,—

"Goodness! however amiable the governor, one could not find it very entertaining in that place."

"Yes, yes," said Roger, in answer to his wife's thought; "yes, I suffered much there, but more from our separation than from my imprisonment."

"And we were so far from suspecting it," was Sylvandire's response. The "we" struck Roger as charming.

On the following day, Roger and Sylvandire reached Lyons, where they stayed two or three days. In his constant solicitude for Sylvandire, Roger would not permit her to become fatigued.

During these two or three days, Roger and Sylvandire made a pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Fourvières, the most famous of all the madonnas of France for preserving perfect harmony in families where it exists, and restoring it to those from which it has departed.

On the part of Sylvandire and Roger, this, of course, was an unnecessary precaution: they loved each other devotedly, they anticipated no diminishing of their mutual affection.

After a stay similar to the one they had made at Châlon, the couple quitted the second capital of France, and halted successively at Valence, Orange, and Avignon.

At Avignon, especially. How could one pass by

Avignon and fail to visit the fountain of Vaucluse? That would have been high treason against poetry.

Now, in those days, lovers were very fond of poetry, and especially fond of nature; they loved hill, valley, and stream. See "Astrée" and "Cléopâtre."

They therefore made a pilgrimage to the fountain of Vaucluse, just as they had made one to Notre Dame de Fourvières, and all the way Roger kept calling Sylvandire his dear Laura, and Sylvandire addressed Roger only as her handsome Petrarch.

Beggars to whom they gave alms along the road shed tears at sight of the beautiful pair.

They continued their journey and came to Arles. They desired to see the ruins of the city which at one time disputed with Byzantium the title of queen of the world. Save for the mistral, according to the savants, Arles was Constantinople.

But there was just then much less interest in antiquity than in an event that had happened within a fortnight.

A worthy bourgeois of the town of Arles, whose misfortune it had been to take unto himself a wife with a character the very opposite, it seemed, of his own, unable to endure the daily annoyances due to their clashing temperaments, resolved for his part to become a widower. But to become a widower would avail nothing, unless he could achieve his purpose in such a way as to be shielded from the rigors of the law.

Now, here is the expedient to which that worthy Arlesian resorted to attain his end.

On the banks of the Rhone he had a country house very much liked by his wife, whose custom it was to spend all her Sundays there. The means of transportation usually employed by the lady upon these occasions was a charming little mule, appropriately caparisoned, and of which,

as the country-side said, as much care was taken as of the pope's. What did the murderer do? For the three days preceding the accustomed journey, he deprived the poor animal of all drink; it followed that, on Sunday morning, accompanied by her husband, who, for once, wished to be of her party, the dame set out, riding her mule. The latter, constantly on the lookout for water, had no sooner caught sight of the Rhone, than she broke into a run that nobody could check, and dashed into the flood with the speed of a stag as it leaps into a stream when hard pressed by a pack of hounds. Fortunately or unfortunately, as the reader chooses to adopt the point of view of husband or wife, the Rhone was at that point so swift that both dame and mule were swept away by the torrent; and, again fortunately or unfortunately, the water, being as deep as it was swift, both very soon disappeared beneath the waves, while the husband, chained to the bank undoubtedly by grief, raised a great hue and cry, tossing his arms and shouting for help in the hope that no help would come.

His hope was realized. The wife and mule were drowned together. The husband regretted the mule; but great causes demand great sacrifices.

However, the affair had made such a noise that justice bestirred itself. The husband was summoned to appear in court; but he had seemed so disconsolate, he had shed so many tears over the death of his consort, that, in the absence of evidence, the judge had set him at liberty.

Sylvandire was deeply moved by the poor woman's fate, and Roger declared, in his indignation, that if the man were not a clown he would seek him out and demand satisfaction for his infamous conduct.

And they hastened to leave the unfortunate town, and the next day arrived at Marseilles.

As this was the goal of their journey, they made arrangements to stay for a time at a hotel. On the very day of their arrival, they went for a stroll on the Cannebière and the Allées de Meilhan, everywhere making open display of their affection, as evinced by the most extravagant endearments. People took them for a recently wedded pair enjoying their honeymoon, and they gazed in admiration.

In the hôtel where they stayed, among the people whom they met, everywhere, in short, favorable comment was made upon this fortunate pair.

"What a handsome man, and how his wife adores him!" exclaimed the women.

All Marseilles was talking of Roger and Sylvandire.

One day, Roger, who had gone out alone in the early morning, returned to their rooms and told his wife that toward noon they would go to pay a visit to a Sardinian broker through whom he had just disposed of a troublesome piece of property.

On Sylvandire's asking what toilet would be suitable for the occasion, Roger replied, —

"The handsomest you have, my dear. I wish this stranger to report in his own country that in all his travels he has seen no woman more beautiful than you."

Such advice Sylvandire always followed with an alacrity that did credit to her conjugal obedience. Her beauty, moreover, enhanced by elegant laces and flashing diamonds, was truly supernatural, and when she entered her chair, the bearers themselves were dazzled.

The Sardinian lived in the Rue du Paradis. He was a tall old man whose beard was gray and pointed, as worn in the time of Cardinal Richelieu by Jew, Greek, Arab, everybody, in short, Sardinian excepted, and he spoke all tongues. He seemed to be impatiently awaiting

his two visitors; with brightening countenance he hastened forward to meet them. Sylvandire's beauty seemed to electrify all who came near her.

Nothing breeds confidence like success. Sylvandire observed the effect that she produced; she was adorably gracious and amiable.

Like a gallant husband, and to show to advantage the treasures of his wife's intellect, Roger turned the conversation sometimes upon trivial, sometimes upon grave, topics.

Sylvandire supported Boileau's test, and passed with perfect ease "from grave to gay, from lively to severe."

Roger swelled with pride; from time to time he would give the Sardinian a significant nod which might be taken to mean, —

"You see that I told you the truth."

And the broker would reply with a look that clearly meant, —

"She is a woman such as one seldom sees."

Roger begged Sylvandire to speak Italian, and for half an hour Sylvandire engaged in conversation in the Tuscan idiom and with a Roman accent.

Roger begged Sylvandire to play something on the harpsichord, and Sylvandire played a bit from the opera of "Orphée," and sang to her own accompaniment.

The strains terminated in the midst of applause, and the listeners exchanged nods and smiles afresh.

The Sardinian whispered a few words in Roger's ear.

"Oh! as to that," replied the chevalier, "it is impossible! and I fear that madame would never consent, whatever my entreaties."

"Why, what is monsieur saying, dear?" asked Sylvandire.

"Nothing," answered Roger.

"But what is it?"

"He requests an impossibility."

"What is it?"

"He says that he has seen the Spanish gypsies dance, the almehs of Egypt and the bayaderes of India."

"Well?"

"And he pretends —"

"What?"

"He is convinced that you surpass them all in grace, and he is sure that if you would dance a minuet or a gavotte —"

"Oh!" exclaimed Sylvandire.

"There, I told you so, my dear," returned Roger; "it is not to be thought of."

"Yet, my love," said Sylvandire, not wishing to stop on the high road to coquetry and conquest, "if I had some one to go through the figures with, I would willingly dance a minuet."

"Here, take me," cried the old Sardinian.

"Very well," said Roger, "and I will supply the music."

And he struck up the air of the minuet of "Exaudet," while Sylvandire, with her grotesque partner, executed its figures with ravishing grace and precision.

Sylvandire's success rose to a triumph.

"How old is madame?" inquired the merchant in tones of profound admiration.

"Nineteen years, seven months, and fifteen days," replied Roger, "not yet twenty years old, monsieur, not twenty years old!"

"You did not say a word too much, my dear monsieur," returned the Sardinian; "and your eulogies of madame have, I must admit, fallen below the truth."

"Ah! monsieur!" exclaimed Sylvandire, casting a grateful glance at her husband.

"No, upon my word," proceeded the broker with a leer, "you are the most charming lady I have ever met, a truly Oriental beauty, a pearl of the seraglio, a veritable houri, a priceless woman."

"It seems to me, dear Roger, that I am very gallantly complimented in your presence," affectedly remarked Sylvandire.

"No, dear," returned Roger; "you are worthily appreciated, that is all."

Thereupon they took their leave; but, as he was showing them out, the Sardinian invited the couple to breakfast with him, the next morning, on board of a tartan riding at anchor off the harbor. Besides the breakfast, there would be the sport of fishing; it was the season of the year for sardines.

A pleasure party so novel seemed enchanting to Sylvandire, who was accepting cordially, but on observing that Roger made no response, she turned uneasily toward him.

"Well," she asked, "why are you silent? Would you refuse?"

"No, my dear; but I have my fears."

"Fears! and of what?"

"That you may not prove to be a good sailor."

"Oh! there is no danger."

"Then you wish to join this fishing excursion?"

"I am dying to do so."

"Your will is law."

"Delightful husband that you are!"

"Very well, then, my dear host," said Roger, "expect us to-morrow."

"To-morrow," repeated Sylvandire.

"To-morrow," echoed the Sardinian.

On the morrow, at the appointed hour, they were at

the Sardinian's. A neat and handsome little shallop awaited them at the quay a short distance above the custom-house. All three got into it and they were taken out to the tartan, which was moored off the Château d'If.

It was a beautiful vessel, built for speed, and it skimmed the waters like a sea-bird. It was commanded by a captain thirty or thirty-five years old, who was noticeable for his Oriental face and his foreign costume. The captain spoke only Italian, which afforded Sylvandire fresh opportunity for displaying her linguistic talent. He had magnificent eyes, a Grecian nose, and teeth like pearls.

They breakfasted heartily. They saw the nets drawn in, breaking with the weight of the fish, and they agreed forthwith to be present at the torchlight fishing on the next night.

As they went back to their lodgings, Sylvandire was tireless in her praises of the captain; how handsome he was, how strong, how brave, what a lofty style of expression he had, how luxurious had been his entertainment of his guests, how obedient his crew at a word, a gesture, a sign!

"Most assuredly," said Sylvandire as they walked along the quay, "that man is above his station."

"Most assuredly," answered Roger.

The next morning Roger went back to the Sardinian's; on his return, he found his wife laughing and dancing quite alone.

"Good!" said he, "she is in love with the captain already."

They were not to start until six o'clock in the afternoon. Every ten minutes Sylvandire glanced at the clock; she would have liked to turn the hands forward. Roger

smiled bitterly and shook his head; but Sylvandire was not thinking of Roger.

At the moment of embarking came the permit from the inspector of the port. Roger asked the Sardinian if they would have good weather.

"Superb," answered Sylvandire.

But the Sardinian winked very significantly, as if to say, "Never fear, we shall have the sort of weather we need."

They entered a small boat, and, as they were rowing against the wind, they advanced very slowly. As a result, night came on, and they were still only off the Île de Pommègue. During the passage, great clouds had gathered on the horizon, and were rolling in like a tide; then they surrounded the moon, which, losing itself amid their cottony billows, seemed like an island of fire; but, little by little they drew it within their dense folds and extinguished its light.

The sea itself was threatening, and dashed noisily against the rocks and the shore.

Through the darkness, long streaks of phosphorescent foam were seen speeding like trails of fire.

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried Sylvandire, "it seems to me that we are going to have a storm."

"What do you say to the weather, my dear host," inquired Roger of the Sardinian.

"Fine weather for feezing! fine weather for feezing!" answered the latter, with a mocking look which Sylvandire caught, and which frightened her.

"What do you mean, monsieur?" she asked, shrinking back against Roger.

Roger shuddered at the touch of this woman whom he had loved so well, and whom perhaps he still loved.

Mechanically he drew away.

"I am afraid," said Sylvandire.

Roger did not speak, and he let his head fall into his two hands.

The Sardinian at that moment lighted a torch, and, rising, he waved it for some time in the air, and then he extinguished it.

The wind moaned in melancholy gusts; it sounded like the wailing of human souls.

Suddenly, a flash illumined the heavens, and by its light the tartan was seen tacking about, only five hundred feet away.

Presently, they descried something advancing through the gloom; it was a yawl manned by five men.

Two men were rowing; two men were standing in the bow; the fifth was sitting in the stern.

In the last, Sylvandire recognized the captain of the tartan.

But the face that she had deemed so handsome the day before, she now thought stamped with a sinister expression.

"Come alongside!" shouted the captain in Italian.

And the two boats lay side by side.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Sylvandire, judging from the expression of the new-comers' faces that they had nothing to do, as she had supposed, with a pleasure party, "*Mon Dieu!* what is the matter? What are they going to do?"

She had barely uttered these words when both oarsmen and the two men in front boarded their boat; and while the two oarsmen seized, or pretended to seize, Roger, the others took Sylvandire in their arms and bore her away.

"Roger!" she cried, "Roger! help! help! save me, Roger! save me, save your Sylvandire!"

Instinctively and mechanically Roger sprang up; but

the two men held him fast. True, had Roger wished, he could have taken one in each hand and hurled both together into the sea.

Meanwhile, white with terror, Sylvandire was taken from the boat into the yawl.

"Roger, Roger!" she essayed to cry once more. "Roger, help! I am dying!"

And she lost consciousness.

As Sylvandire's voice died away in its last appeal, Roger was forced to recall all the hardships that he had endured, all the dishonor that had been heaped upon him, all the shame that he had suffered, to refrain from leaping into the yawl and snatching her from the hands of those men.

He lifted his head, and he let it fall again between his hands.

"Push off!" cried the Sardinian.

The captain took Sylvandire from the arms of the men that had kidnapped her, the oarsmen sprang to their oars, and the yawl moved swiftly away.

"*Addio, padrone!*" shouted the captain.

"*Addio!*" returned the trader, with the malicious little laugh peculiar to him.

Roger sent a long look after Sylvandire. He could still see her white dress shining out in the night; and, as men and yawl were already lost to sight in the darkness, one might have fancied it a ghost gliding over the surface of the sea.

But, in a few moments, it, too, had disappeared in the fog, and nothing more could be seen.

The old man immediately seized the oars and began to row away from the yawl, and in the direction of the land, with a sturdiness that one would never have looked for in his thin and debilitated frame.

"Well," he said to Roger, after almost ten minutes of silence, and easing up the movement of his oars, "well, now you are free, monsou le sevalier. Have matters gone as you wished, and are you satisfied with us?"

"Yes," replied Roger, gloomily, "yes, I am free, thanks to a crime!"

"Bah! a crime!" repeated the old man; "you need not look at it so. It is a joke, that is all. Your lady is going straight to Tunis. The captain has orders from an Indian prince who wishes a French wife. You were tired of yours; now both are suited."

Roger took a last look at the horizon and saw indeed, in a field of moonlight, the tartan speeding away in the white fog in the direction of Tunis.

"Come," said the old man, "we must think of ourselves now, for we are nearing land. Rend your clothes quickly, wet yourself from head to foot in the sea-water, and we must break a bench or two of the boat."

With respect to himself, Roger silently executed these orders, and, aided by the wind which became more and more threatening, they arrived in port at about one o'clock in the morning.

As soon as the Sardinian came in sight of the Round Tower, he set up such a clamor of sobs and groans and vociferations that Roger was aroused from a horrible trance into which he had fallen.

"*O povero! ô povero marito!*" he cried. "*Ohime! ohime!*"

These ejaculations, with all their changes rung in a variety of tongues, brought out the custom-house officials and their body of guards, with here and there a scattering of belated citizens.

"What is the matter?" shouted the chief of the excise-men.

"The matter! You can ask what is the matter! *Ah! che schiagure*, such a beautiful woman! *Oh! che peccato!*"

And, all the while the old man was venting his unintelligible cries, the bark continued to advance.

"But tell us what has happened!" cried the bystanders.

Then, while landing, the old man declared that just as they had reached the tartan where Roger, Sylvandire and himself were about to join a fishing party, a boat caught by a big wave had crashed into them, breaking the rudder and a bench, and the shock was so violent that Madame d'Anguilhem who was standing, had been precipitated into the sea.

The old man went on to say that Roger had immediately jumped after his wife, but in vain. The sea was heavy, the night was black. The unfortunate Sylvandire had been seen no more.

And you should have seen the Sardinian's frantic gesticulation, his mad pantomime! You should have heard him embellish his recital with all the amplifications of Italian rhetoric!

Six times Roger had dived. The Sardinian had endeavored to hold him back by his coat-skirt, but in vain; finally, when he was about to go down the seventh time, he had seized him round the waist, had mastered him and held him by main force, assuring him that his wife had been picked up by the other boat. At last Roger had fainted away and he himself, poor old man, had meanwhile brought the skiff into port. As for the men in the yawl, they had not been seen again nor did he know what people they were, the violence of the waves having instantly swept them out of sight.

Monsieur d'Anguilhem was pitied; some of the by-

standers, more sympathetic than others, shed tears. He stood speechless, downcast, motionless. His dejection was taken for despair bordering on madness, and their interest in him was augmented by his forlorn attitude. Had he been poor, he would have been overwhelmed with alms, the circumstances were so evident, his grief so real.

Upon returning to his hotel, Roger shut himself up. His patron escorted him back, and narrated to every one the night's sad accident. Roger had given orders that he should be left alone with his grief; and so no one entered his room except the Sardinian trader, who came the next morning at ten o'clock to learn how the bereaved husband had passed the night.

Then each looked to the bolting of the door, and Roger counted out five hundred pistoles to the Sardinian; in exchange for which, the latter presented him an official report signed by four known citizens of the place, setting forth in minutest detail the nocturnal misadventure which had caused Madame d'Anguilhem's death.

The Chevalier d'Anguilhem despatched this official report to Maître Bouteau, together with a letter full of chastened reflections.

He also announced the loss of his well-beloved wife to the Marquis de Cretté, d'Herbigny, Clos-Renaud, and Chastellux.

Then he started for Anguilhem, where he arrived twelve days after Sylvandire's embarkment for Tunis.

Now, let us frankly avow a fact which our readers have undoubtedly already guessed.

The Chevalier Roger Tancrède d'Anguilhem had purely and simply sold his wife to a Tunisian corsair, whose agent in France was the Sardinian broker.

It was not badly planned for a provincial.

XXVII.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM LEARNED THAT HIS FATHER HAD NOT DELIVERED TO MADEMOISELLE DE BEUZERIE THE LETTER RESTORING HER FREEDOM, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

THE Baron d'Anguilhem, it will readily be understood, with his mingled love and respect for the château of his fathers, had not experienced such a change of fortune without thought of affecting a few changes for the better in his estate. The marriage over, his affairs with Roger settled, back at Anguilhem, in short, he had set about the great work that had so long engaged his mind, and which want of funds alone had kept him from undertaking.

The first of these improvements had been a grand avenue of sycamores, which he had laid out in front of his house, and which in these two years and a half had already become very handsome; moreover, between the trees had been set a hedge of elder and hazel. At the end of the avenue, which was nearly an eighth of a league in length, was seen to rise the manor of Anguilhem, enlarged by a story, which was itself surmounted by a belvedere pavilion, a fashion that was beginning to be introduced, even in the environs of Loches.

Needless to say, in this architectural renovation, which lent the house a lordly little air that was delightful to behold, the famous tower of La Guérite had been scrupulously respected.

Then, having enlarged his house, the baron bethought himself of extending his domains. He bought the famous

marsh, two leagues in extent, which offered nothing but fine snipe and duck hunting for winter, but which gave the estate the same stretch that the old barony had possessed; then, one after another, he had bought up all the little woodlands that had so long been objects of covetousness with him, so that the baron was now able to speak of my woods, my marshes, my meadows,—a privilege which, to do him justice, he did not abuse.

Finally, dependents were added in proportion to the estate.

He had two farmers instead of one, three horses were in his stable, and among them figured Christopher, whom he had brought back with him from Paris, and who, like the old soldiers that fought at Steinkerke and Bergen-op-Zoom, was looked upon as a pensioner; then, besides the two women, Mesdemoiselles Marie and Gothon, and the gamekeeper, Lajeunesse, he had two additional men servants.

Nor have we made mention of the Abbé Dubuquoi, who, no longer needed as a tutor, was elevated to the rank of librarian, and who spent his time among the booksellers of Loches, extolling the two hundred and forty ill-sorted volumes that formed the utmost extent of his empire.

Thanks to this establishment, beneath, however, rather than above his means, the Baron d'Anguilhem was considered the richest landholder of the neighborhood.

The three hundred thousand livres which he had retained out of Monsieur de Bouzenois' fortune brought him in, therefore, a million a year in bows, and bows that were the most sought after in the province.

As for the baroness, she remained precisely the same, that is to say, the most perfect type of the excellent wife, the excellent mother. However, she had added to

the six gowns already in her possession, the two gowns that she had had made in Paris; but, upon great occasions, she still continued to make the pastry herself, which she did, moreover, to perfection, and to dry with her own hands the handsome Japanese plates that Roger had wiped so carefully.

We have led back to Roger by this route, because, in the midst of their changed fortunes, the good father and the tender mother thought only of the son to whom they owed it all. When they were together, which happened often, the chevalier's name, uttered by the one or the other, was very certain to turn the conversation on the topic of this well-beloved son; and yet, it must be said, there were moments when the baron and the baroness accused Roger of ingratitude.

This was because Monsieur and Madame d'Anguilhem had known nothing of Roger's imprisonment. Cretté had rightly comprehended that the announcement of such news would prostrate them, and since they, confined in their province and possessed of no relative in Paris, could in no manner assist their son's friends in the steps they were taking, he had determined to spare them useless grief. He had therefore written them that the chevalier, having been charged with a secret mission, had set out for Holland, notifying them, in addition to this, that, as his place of residence must be concealed from all, they would probably receive no letter from him for a time, owing to the measure then recently adopted by the government, and so happily continued even to our own day, of opening letters for the very innocent purpose of knowing what they contained. They had, therefore, had no news of Roger for fifteen months, and this, thanks to Cretté's letter, his parents had clearly understood; but what they had been quite unable to make out, on the other

hand, was that Loches did not lie on the shortest route from Paris to The Hague.

Upon his release from prison, Roger had written to Anguilhem; but, warned by Cretté, he had maintained his parents in error. His letter, as may be supposed, had been welcomed with delight. Yet, after so long an absence, they especially longed to see him. Invitations to come and spend a month at the Château d'Anguilhem had then succeeded each other with the unweariedness of maternal love; but, in the midst of his grave purposes, Roger had not had time to attend to the claims of his good parents.

When starting for Marseilles, Roger had at last written that he was about to make a trip through Provence, and that he would return by way of Anguilhem, where he would stay a month or two.

At once, all was put in readiness at the château to receive the heir apparent, to feast the prodigal son. Men were set at work upon the finest room in the house, and more furniture was ordered from Loches, in order that Madame d'Anguilhem should want for nothing on her arrival.

Hence, when a chaise made its appearance at the end of the sycamore avenue, advancing with a smartness of pace that did not bespeak the province, a shout rang through the château: "The chevalier! the chevalier!" and all fell into line.

The chaise came on at full speed. It stopped at the entrance. The door opened, and Roger fell into the arms of his father and mother, who wept tears of joy; then from their arms he turned to those of his old tutor, the Abbé Dubuquoi.

A few steps behind them stood the servants, the old drawn by their affection, and the new by curiosity.

Old and new found the young master a very handsome lord.

As for Castor, he was barking from the kennel, and bounding as if he would break his chain.

After the first excitement, the baroness remembered that one of her children was missing. She glanced at the carriage, and, seeing it empty, she cried, —

"And where is Madame d'Anguilhem?"

A vivid blush overspread Roger's countenance, and a tear that was not hypocritical fell from his eye.

Let us hasten to say that only one fell.

"I have met with a great misfortune, mother," said Roger. "I have lost Madame d'Anguilhem. But let us go in; I will tell you about it."

It would be difficult to convey to the reader an idea of the outcry of grief and amazement that met, in the salon, the recital of the catastrophe at Marseilles.

The baroness thought herself about to faint away with grief, and fell to repeating like Géronte, —

"What business had she to be in that vessel?"

However, Roger very soon consoled her, and, to accomplish the great miracle, he had needed only to take his mother aside and say to her these few words, —

"God, who knows all, mother, knows that Madame d'Anguilhem did not make me happy, and, unfortunately, the world knows also that she has not always held our name in the respect which was its due; her misfortune is therefore but a punishment."

Forced to lie on many points, on this one, at least, Roger did not lie.

It had been more than three years since Roger had seen Anguilhem; but his absence had not been long enough for him to have forgotten anything. All its associations were still fresh in his heart, and every one of

them was connected with his love for Mademoiselle de Beuzerie. Older memories he had none; it seemed to him as if he had begun to live only on the day on which he first saw Constance.

As we have said, the baroness had made ready the finest room in the château; but Roger asked to sleep in his little room. It will be remembered that it was there that the young girl, whom he thought dead, had appeared to him, bidding him live. He approached the picture of Christ, knelt, as he had formerly been accustomed to do, and tried to recall his childish prayer; but, when he had prayed in those days, he was young, pure, full of illusions and of faith; and above all he had not committed an act that, take it altogether, strongly resembled a crime.

Roger went to bed; but he lay there a long time without going to sleep. At last, sleep came, and dreams with sleep; the picture seemed to be swinging back again as in his boyish vision; but this time, not Constance appeared, but Sylvandire, who descended from the pedestal and came, cold and icy, and lay down beside him.

Three times Roger awoke, and three times, on falling asleep again, did he dream the same dream.

He rose in the morning at dawn, went himself to the stable and saddled Christopher, and, as he hoped to drive away the memory of Sylvandire by one more tender, he followed the road to the place where, on a certain Easter night, he had found Monsieur de Beuzerie's coach upset in the marsh, and had returned in triumph with Constance on this same Christopher who, after an interval of six years, was taking him back to the same spot.

Roger recognized the place. It seemed to him that the event had happened but yesterday, and that all that had happened since was a dream.

At breakfast time, in a calmer mood and a more tranquil frame of mind, Roger returned to the château. The reminiscences of morning had gained the better of the dreams of night; Constance had vanquished Sylvandire.

During the breakfast, Roger inquired after the entire neighborhood; but, as is usual with people who think very much of one person, of that one he dared not say a word. He kept hoping that his father or his mother would pronounce the name of Mademoiselle de Beuzerie; but that name did not leave their lips.

To tell the truth, however, Roger's impatience was not exempt from anxiety. Every moment, among the genealogical enumerations of the province, he was expecting to hear from his father's mouth these fatal words:—

"By the way, Mademoiselle Constance de Beuzerie has married Monsieur de Croisey," — or some other person.

But, to Roger's great surprise, the baron and the baroness appeared to have a mutual understanding, and neither of them mentioned Constance.

After breakfast, Roger mounted Christopher, who moved off with a very bad grace. He was beginning to think, having recognized in the chevalier a few old unrelinquished traits, that his love-chases were about to begin anew. Now, Christopher had grown older as well as the other people in this story. Christopher, in short, was six years older.

This time, Roger pursued a route that the poor animal again recognized. It led to La Chapelle-Saint-Hippolyte, whither Roger and Constance had fled, and whose good curé had so scrupulously betrayed them.

He hoped that the curé, on recognizing him, would inquire about Constance.

Alas! the curé was dead, and his place was filled by another curé sent from Lorient. The new pastor had

never known Constance; there was no likelihood then of his mentioning Constance.

As for the new curé's housekeeper, he had brought her with him from Lorient: there was then no chance of her knowing more than her master. Besides, she spoke nothing but low Breton, a language that Roger had little knowledge of, albeit the savants have since discovered that it was the ancient Celtic tongue.

Roger therefore returned to the château as ignorant as when he went away.

The same silence was maintained at dinner. Roger, too, was silent and preoccupied; he ransacked every corner of his brain for some phrase by which he might broach that important topic. Finally, after a thousand circumlocutions which brought him no help from his parents, he ventured.

"And — and — you say nothing about our ancient feud with the Beuzeries, father," he said, trying to smile.

"It has quite calmed down, and we are cruelly avenged," answered the baron.

"Indeed! and how is that?" cried Roger, trembling in every fibre at the thought that perhaps Constance was dead or unhappily married.

"Think of it," replied the baron, the baroness meanwhile regarding her son uneasily, "think of it, Constance is not married; she is still single."

Roger shook like a leaf. He reddened and grew pale by turns. He essayed to rise from his arm-chair and fell back into his place. Then tears came to his eyes, and with a deep sigh he let his head sink upon his breast.

"Yes," said the baroness, "she has been in retirement now almost a year at the convent in Loches, and it is not quite certain that, in spite of her parents' opposition, she will not take the veil."

Now, when Roger thought that he had lost Constance, he had wished to join the Jesuits. So, when Constance lost Roger, she had desired to become a nun.

God, then, is at the bottom of all true love.

"Unmarried," thought Roger; "unmarried, and loving me, doubtless, all the time!"

"She, who was so proud," said the baron, ignorant of what was passing in his son's mind.

"You mean," corrected the baroness, "whose parents were so proud; as for Constance, God knows that she was a dear, sweet girl, and I loved her as if I had been her mother."

Roger thanked the baroness with a look.

"And — and what did she say of my marriage?" he hesitatingly continued.

"I' faith, I know nothing about it," replied the baron with a slightly embarrassed air, "we have not seen the Beuzeries since your marriage."

The conversation was dropped there; but Roger grew more thoughtful than ever, and he rose from the table without having added another word.

After dinner, Roger took his gun, unchained Castor, whose joy at going out with his old master restored for the moment all his ancient vigor, and he resumed his walks of other days in the direction of the warren; but in three years how many days have rolled away, and with the days, how many events! At every step of the way he was confronted by regret or remorse; behind every bush he dreaded to see Sylvandire and grieved that he did not see Constance.

Roger's homecoming, however, was fêted by all the country-side; the depression occasioned by the death of the young baroness was not of long duration. Very few had known her.

Then there was another reason why the effect produced by the accident recounted by Roger to his mother, and by his mother imparted to every one else, should make so brief an impression: as a widower, Roger was a marriageable man; Roger was twenty-two years old; Roger was handsomer than he had ever been, even in the days when he had been known as "handsome Roger" or "handsome Tancrède;" in short, Roger possessed, not counting what would come to him at the death of his parents, that is, not counting his expectations, as they say in that infamous slang which is called the language of business men, Roger, we say, possessed in his own right at the time the pretty income of fifty thousand livres.

Hence every mother began, little by little, to resume her cherished idea of a match between Roger and her daughter.

Roger was the hero, therefore, of the chase, of balls and of fêtes, but, alas! he was a very melancholy hero. Yet, at these gatherings he sometimes saw a face still more melancholy than his own: it was the Vicomte de Beuzerie's. Roger avoided him, for the sight of that old man whose obstinate pride had been the chief cause of his sorrows, hurt him grievously, summoning up as it did a horde of bitter memories.

One day, when hunting, he met the viscount near the very warren where, almost three years before they had so violently quarrelled, and where, later, when setting out full of hopes and illusions, Roger had taken leave of Constance.

Monsieur de Beuzerie, who had at first crossed a clover-patch in order to avoid a meeting with the chevalier, changed his mind, and, going directly up to him, he said, —

"Monsieur d'Anguilhem, kindly tell me yourself, that I may have it from your own mouth, whether or not you are married."

"I am a widower, monsieur," replied Roger, trembling.

"Then come with me, monsieur," rejoined the viscount, "and you will save my family from despair. My daughter has gone into retirement at the Conception, she will not listen to us; she insists that we have deceived her, that you are still single, that you have not released her from her promise, in short, that she can give herself only to you or to God; and then, too, perhaps she has gone mad, for her mother and I are unable to account for her behavior during these last two years."

Roger dropped his gun and stared at the baron like a man about to faint.

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed the old man, moved even to tears, "all has been visited upon our own heads, Monsieur d'Anguilhem, and we are truly very unhappy."

Roger felt that his knees were giving way beneath him.

"Oh! monsieur le vicomte," cried he, "forgive me, forgive Constance. But I think I catch a glimpse of the truth; before going with you, permit me to return to Anguilhem. I need to ask a word of explanation from my father; after that, I am entirely at your service. At what hour to-morrow do you desire to see me at Beuzerie?"

"Wait for me, monsieur le chevalier," answered the viscount, "and to-morrow in passing I will call for you."

"I will wait for you."

"But, consider, this is no idle engagement, Monsieur d'Anguilhem. I count upon you; I may count upon you, may I not?" he continued with kindly insistence, for he

did not know whether the old insult that he had inflicted upon Roger were not still rankling in his young neighbor's heart.

Roger made him a sign with both head and hand at the same time, and immediately set off along the road to Anguilhem. However, after he had gone a hundred paces, he turned and saw that the old man was sitting down, motionless, and with bowed head, like a statue of Resignation.

Two hours later, Roger had reached Anguilhem.

"Father," said Roger to the baron who was picking some apricots in the orchard, "father, did you not, then, deliver to Mademoiselle de Beuzerie the letter announcing my marriage, which I begged you to hand to her?"

Monsieur d'Anguilhem, thus taken unawares, hesitated a moment in embarrassment.

This confusion on the part of his father whom he profoundly respected seemed to Roger like a grievous reproach. Hence, instantly seizing the baron's hands with his own, he cried, —

"Oh! my dear father, be assured that whatever you have done was done for the best."

"Well, no, my dear Roger," said the baron, "I did not deliver it. You had not told me what the letter contained, and I must confess that, considering the delicacy of our position, I feared the unfortunate letter might do more harm than good."

"And the letter?"

"It is still upstairs."

And the baron, followed by Roger, returned to the château, ascended to his room, drew from an oaken cabinet, where it had grown yellow, the fatal letter, elaborately sealed, and handed it to his son.

"Oh! I comprehend it all, now," cried Roger; "I

had told her to believe only my own words, spoken or written. She would believe nothing that did not come from me, she has all this time been waiting for me to make good my word; and she would have waited until death! Oh! noble being, how she loved me!"

Roger took the letter and went to his room, in order that, quite undisturbed, he might reflect upon past events, and perhaps also upon events to come.

XXVIII.

HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM AND MADEMOISELLE CONSTANCE DE BEUZERIE FIND THEMSELVES MORE IN LOVE THAN EVER, AND SOME OF THE PERPLEXITIES INTO WHICH ROGER IS THEREBY PLUNGED.

ROGER passed a very restless night. Again, in his dreams, he saw the picture turn, and this time it was Constance who appeared; but, just as she was stepping down and approaching his bed, Sylvandire, with threatening attitude, rose between her and Roger, and, try as the unhappy young people might, they were ever unable to come near each other.

However small Roger's faith in dreams might be, this was so like the actual state of affairs, and so marvellously prophetic that it left on his mind an impression not yet dissipated when, about eight o'clock in the morning, Monsieur de Beuzerie arrived.

The old gentleman was on horseback. Roger at once had Christopher saddled; for, since the day before, he had guessed that he was to accompany the viscount to the convent at Loches. Together they set off in the direction of the town.

At times, as they rode along, the thought that he was to see Constance again would cause the chevalier such acute anguish of heart that he would suddenly rein in his horse and grow so pale as to look as if he were about to fall. Then Monsieur de Beuzerie would

himself stop and regard him anxiously; but Roger would at once summon all his strength and proceed again.

Soon Loches came in sight. Roger was conscious of nothing but that, amid that mass of houses, was a house that enclosed Constance. Roger could think of nothing save that, in half an hour, in a quarter of an hour, in five minutes, he would be standing face to face with her whom he had not seen for nearly three years, and from whom, during those three years, he had thought himself eternally separated.

They entered the town; they entered the street. They knocked at the convent door. The attendant opened it. Monsieur de Beuzerie asked to see his daughter, and the attendant answered in the calmest of accents, —

"Very well, monsieur le vicomte. Go into the parlor, and she will be summoned."

The reply was very simple and very natural, yet it caused Roger to shiver. He was expecting to be told that Constance was no longer in the convent, or perhaps, as at Chinon, that Constance was dead.

They entered. A nun showed Roger and the viscount into the parlor, then left them alone.

The viscount and Roger exchanged not a word with each other; but the father drew near the grating, while the young man stood back, almost hidden in the half light.

At the end of a few moments the door opened, and Constance, dressed all in white, appeared and advanced to the grating slowly and with a foot-fall that seemed to make no sound.

She was pale and wan, but more beautiful, more graceful than ever. One would have said that all that

was earthly in her had been consumed by the fire of love, and that, of the suffering woman of this world, there remained but a blessed angel ready to wing its flight heavenward.

But suddenly, on glancing beyond her father, Constance's eye met Roger's. She faltered and uttered a loud cry. Thinking her about to fall, Roger sprang toward her, and, thrusting his arms through the grating, he cried, —

"O Constance, Constance! I know that you are an angel; but, perfect though you are, will you ever forgive me?"

"It is he!" exclaimed Constance. "It is indeed he."

And, lifting her clasped hands to heaven, with upturned look, she said, —

"O God, I thank thee. I did well to believe. I did well to hope. He has come back to me."

"But it is nevertheless true that he was married," said the Vicomte de Beuzerie, wishing to prove to his daughter that he had not deceived her.

"Married!" repeated Constance. "Married! Roger, is it true?"

"Alas!" said Roger. "I was forced to yield to necessity, and here is the letter that I wrote you at the fatal date, and which my father, inspired by God, I believe, failed to deliver."

"Then why do you come here, Roger?"

"To tell you that I am — free, and to thank you for your generous devotion."

"Free, Roger! Did you say that you were free?"

"Yes," murmured Roger, in a scarcely audible voice.

"Father," cried Constance, "let me leave this place! O God, O God, I who have begged for death, wish now, dear Lord, to live. Roger is free!"

Each tender word from the girl's lips was like a dagger-thrust in Roger's heart.

He turned to Monsieur de Beuzerie, and begged for a few moments' conversation with Constance.

The old man was so rejoiced to have his daughter, whom he thought forever lost, again restored, that he instantly granted Roger's request, and even left the parlor.

The door had barely closed when Roger seized Constance's hand and covered it with kisses.

"O Constance!" he said. "I was at the mercy of an unconquerable necessity. Tell me, do you truly forgive me?"

"I forgive you, and I love you, Roger, more than ever." Then, suddenly breaking off and covering her face with her hands, she cried, —

"Oh! wretch that I am! I talk of my own happiness, Roger, and give not a thought to the soul of the poor dead woman whom I wrong, and who perhaps curses me."

Roger felt a cold chill creep through his veins, and he gave a sigh.

"You regret her, Roger," said Constance; "for undoubtedly she was beautiful, oh, more beautiful than I. That is not difficult to imagine, especially now; but oh, she did not love you as I love you. Of that I am very sure."

"No, Constance," replied Roger. "But I ought at least to observe the proprieties. A certain length of time is obligatory for mourning."

"Oh, yes, dear, yes, of course. Oh, with hope, waiting is nothing. It is the waiting in despair that kills. Now that you have come back to me after three years, I am sure of you, Roger."

And she held out her hand to him with the angelic trust that made her, all unconsciously, a woman sublime in resignation and devotion.

Just then Monsieur de Beuzerie entered. The two young people regarded each other with a smile. They had said all they had to say, and yet it had been three years since they had seen each other. But so much is contained in the three words, "I love you," that when these have been spoken, all has been said; and if one would hear something new, they must be repeated.

"Well, Constance, are you ready?" said the old man.

Constance looked at Roger, as if to ask once more whether it were indeed true that she was to leave the convent.

"Yes, monsieur," said the chevalier to the Vicomte de Beuzerie. "Yes, mademoiselle consents to give us back all the happiness of which absence from her has robbed us."

Constance pressed both hands upon her heart and drew a deep breath. Then her lovely eyes glowed with feeling, a sense of joy sent the blood to her cheeks, and she looked as radiantly beautiful as an angel.

Yet Monsieur de Beuzerie and his daughter could not leave abruptly. That step would have looked exceedingly strange. Roger, on the other hand, could not remain. He therefore saluted Monsieur de Beuzerie and Constance, whose hand he kissed a last time. And, while father and daughter were taking leave of the superior and preparing for their departure, Roger, stung with remorse, the prey of conflicting emotions, returned alone to the Château d'Anguilhem.

His mother saw him pass, his face distorted. On tiptoe she followed. She listened at the door of his room and heard him burst into sobs.

Sadly shaking her head, like a poor woman who has some foreboding of disaster, without knowing what is wrong, the dear dame returned to her chamber; and because her son was weeping, she wept.

Soon the rumor spread through the whole province that the Vicomte de Beuzerie and the Chevalier d'Anguilhem had together visited Mademoiselle Constance de Beuzerie, and, as a result of this visit, the novice had renounced her design of taking the veil, and had returned to her father's house.

In this unlooked-for return of the young girl to more mundane ideals, all thought they saw a ready solution of the differences that had formerly arisen between the two families, and which Roger's marriage had caused to spring up with intensified bitterness.

Constance herself had not a doubt of her future happiness. She had kept her faith in Roger when absent. How, then, could she bring herself to doubt him when, after three years, he had returned to her, as fond as ever?

And, in point of fact, surrounded by all the associations of his youth, Roger had reverted to his first, his only love. Now that he was again with Constance, he well knew the sentiment with which he had regarded Sylvandire to have been a very material love, a delirium of the senses, a surrender to the spell of beauty; and that love, never attaining an elevated plane, had always been love fraught with jealousy and unrest. His feeling for Constance, — it was happiness.

But his happiness was cruelly troubled by the memory of the accident at Marseilles. At times Roger succeeded in forgetting that terrible night, and then his face would lighten up with supreme joy. A smile of ineffable happiness would settle upon his lips. Then

a sudden thought would cross his mind. Roger would grow as pale as death, his flesh creep, and a cold perspiration start from every pore.

The unhappy man always saw that white fog on the horizon, with the tartan fleeing in the direction of Tunis.

As we have said, Roger had expressed to Constance the wish to appear in mourning for a year, and Constance had commended his observance of the conventionalities. Roger had not said a word of marriage. But Constance, having remained faithful to Roger in spite of his infidelity, seeing Roger return, had not thought it necessary to speak of a union which she considered as long before contracted in the sight of God. Consequently, when Roger, hoping that the distractions and the tumult of the capital might expel from his mind the terrors by which it was assailed, spoke of the necessity of a journey to Paris, on the pretext of attending to his affairs, Constance raised no objection, and merely asked when he intended to return.

"As soon as I can possibly do so," replied Roger.

And, to the confiding girl, that reply was sufficient.

Thereupon Roger took leave of the Château d'Anguilhem, of the baron, of the baroness, of the Abbé Dubuquoi, of Christopher and Castor; and, having written to the Marquis de Cretté that he would be with him in eight days, he set out, travelling by short stages.

But, after the third day, Roger could not endure the sluggish progress. It left him too much time for thought on subjects that he wished to forget. He took post-horses, and reached Paris on the fourth night after his departure.

There was yet another terrible moment for Roger.

It was when he entered his hôtel, which he had left in company with Sylvandire. He scarcely dared raise his eyes, fearing to see a light in his wife's apartment, and dreading to hear a servant say, —

"Madame returned in the absence of monsieur le chevalier, and begs that monsieur le chevalier will go to her."

But the apartment was dark and closed, and no voice was raised to speak of Sylvandire. Breton attended his master. Roger trembled in the presence of this old confidant of his jealousy. It seemed as if Breton, who knew all his grievances against Sylvandire, looked at him in a curious way which said, —

"Well, now we have taken our revenge!"

But a more trying ordeal than any of these was one that awaited Roger as he presented himself at Monsieur Bouteau's. The father-in-law's eye was searching. One is not a judge for nothing; but Roger had marshalled all his reserves for this occasion, and he bore it without flinching. The president did not love his daughter, whose character he had been able duly to estimate in the nineteen years during which he had watched over her; but to question had become a habit with him, and he would not have been averse to a petty criminal process, even in his own family. However, this time, he discovered no grounds. For why should he set about sounding the depths of that shrewd Roger, a man who, moreover, renounced his right of inheritance?

It followed that Maître Bouteau mourned with Roger the loss that both had sustained, but in such moderation that he continued to dine occasionally with his son-in-law, and they became greater friends than ever. It was the admiration of everybody that Roger's

affection, even after his wife's death, still extended to her family.

The intimacy existed three months, to the great edification of those in a position to appreciate it. But, one fine morning, while heatedly reproving a lawyer who had been too bold of speech, Maître Bouteau, a man of an irascible temperament, and possessed of a short, thick neck, fell in a fit of apoplexy, and died without recovering consciousness, an event that was not unalloyed with pleasure for Roger, nor one that would have displeased the best son-in-law in the world, who, had he been placed but twenty-four hours in Roger's position, would have understood how the worthiest of fathers-in-law can sometimes become an irksome load.

At the first news of this accident, the housekeeper, who had been with Maître Bouteau for fifteen years, hastened to summon Roger. Roger repaired to the home of his father-in-law, but, as we have said, the honored president did not regain consciousness.

The will was opened. Maître Bouteau left three hundred thousand livres to his son-in-law, five thousand livres to Mademoiselle Fanchon, his housekeeper, and one hundred thousand livres to be divided up in pious legacies among churches and hospitals.

As to cash on hand, it was out of the question. Nor was there found a single stray sou. Mademoiselle Fanchon was a systematic woman.

With all the honors due to his social position, Maître Bouteau was buried in the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, which was beginning to be the fashionable cemetery of the day.

The hundred thousand crowns bequeathed to him by his father-in-law proved a great embarrassment to Roger.

The money weighed upon him singularly. It was Sylvandire's inheritance; but how was he to get the money to her? There was the rub! Besides, with that amount, Sylvandire could ransom herself and return to France. Roger trembled at the thought.

He resolved, nevertheless, to hold that sum always available in bonds payable to the bearer.

Let us turn from Maître Bouteau, of whom we are glad to be rid, to the Marquis de Cretté, with whom, thank God, we have not yet done.

If Maître Bouteau had had a germ of suspicion, in Cretté the germ had attained full growth; but he was that rare combination, a courtier and a man of delicacy. Moreover, he loved Roger as he would have loved a brother. Hence he asked his friend no questions about his wife; but, in the course of conversation and parenthetically, he said, —

"By the way, my friend, you know I had an old account to settle with Royancourt."

"Yes," said Roger.

"Well, knowing that you must not be implicated, I went to look him up at Utrecht, and there I publicly trod on his toes in such a fashion that I at last got him to fight."

"Well?" demanded Roger.

"I gave him a pretty little sword-thrust in the abdomen."

"You have killed him then?"

"No, not exactly. He is just now in the hands of an excellent surgeon. Yet, as the wound was serious, I doubt that he will survive the winter. Do not be too grievously afflicted if you learn at any moment that he has passed from here to the hereafter."

In fact, one morning they read in the "Holland

Gazette," the following notice, under the heading of Amsterdam, March, 1714: —

"Monsieur le Marquis de Royancourt died this morning from the effects of a wound received while hunting. This gentleman came to us eight months ago, charged with a special commission from His Most Christian Majesty."

"Come, come," thought Roger. "It looks as if God must be watching over honest men, after all, since He is ridding me of all my persecutors one after another. Indeed, the proverb is right that says, 'God helps those who help themselves!'"

It was Cretté that showed Roger the death notice.

"Your prison debts are paid," he remarked when the chevalier had read the article in question. "I have discharged one, and you have discharged — "

But Roger turned so pale that Cretté broke off abruptly, and, holding out his hand to his friend, said, —

"Forgive me, chevalier. I am not prying into your secrets. But you know that if those secrets were of such a nature as to compromise you any day, you will find me in the future what you have found me in the past."

Roger pressed the hand of the marquis and heaved a great sigh; but he made no other response.

This caused the marquis to understand that the matter was very serious.

Then Cretté fell back upon his usual advice, — distraction; and, knowing no greater distraction than that afforded by a mistress, Cretté advised Roger to take Mademoiselle Poussette, were it only for a short time. The matter would be very simple, as she was just then solacing Chastellux, who, having also suffered severely

through his affections, had also been in need of consolation.

But Roger answered that his own sorrows were incurable.

Cretté saw that he must leave it all to time.

However, as time wrought no change in Roger's melancholy, and as, on the contrary, it became more and more deep-seated, Cretté concerted with his friends to procure him some diversion from time to time, and in spite of himself, as it were; but the diversion almost always had a different result from what that excellent friend intended.

Thus, one day when d'Herbigny had persuaded Roger to ride with him to Saint Cloud, and being convinced that Roger's decline proceeded from grief at the death of his wife, as a lady passed them in an open barouche, d'Herbigny remarked, —

"Ah! that lady looks like poor Sylvandire!"

Then, as he turned to observe the effect of his sympathetic words, he beheld Roger gripping the saddle with both hands, wild-eyed, and as pale as death.

"What a weakness he had for that woman!" said d'Herbigny to himself, as he shook his head. "Really, it is of no use; he will never get over it."

And he brought Roger, more dead than alive, back to his hôtel.

On another occasion, when Roger, d'Herbigny, Cretté, and Chastellux had all four dined together, Chastellux proposed to his friends that they go to the Comédie-Française, of which he was a constant frequenter, in consequence of his connection with Mademoiselle Poussette. Cretté and d'Herbigny accepted, in the hope of amusing Roger. Roger accepted without knowing what was proposed.

"Phèdre," which was beginning to find favor with the public, was being played, and "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac," which then, as now, was privileged to excite the audience to the highest pitch of hilarity. Roger, all the time plunged in reverie, had listened to "Phèdre" without hearing it, yet he was beginning to be somewhat diverted by the comedy, when they came to the scene where the two lawyers sing to the unhappy Limosin spouse, accused of having taken two wives: —

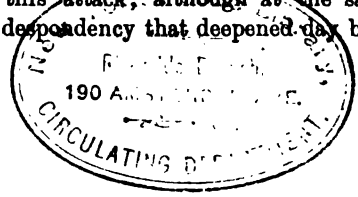
"Polygamy 's a hanging matter."

Now this scene, which threw the people into spasms of delight, had a wholly contrary effect upon d'Anguilhem. He uttered several inarticulate sounds which his friends took for laughter. Then, throwing himself backward, he fell fainting into Cretté's arms.

They carried him back to the hôtel, very ill, and all through the night he was delirious.

Cretté had the forethought to send every one away, and he watched alone beside him.

On the next day the Marquis de Cretté seemed almost as care-ridden as his friend, who very soon rallied from this attack, although at the same time falling into a despondency that deepened day by day.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CIRCULATING

XXIX.

HOW THE PERSIAN AMBASSADOR, MEHEMET RIZA BEG, CAME TO PARIS TO PRESENT THE RESPECTFUL COMPLIMENTS OF HIS SOVEREIGN TO LOUIS XIV., AND HOW THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM WAS CONSTRAINED TO PAY A VISIT TO THAT ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGE.

WHAT rendered Roger more and more melancholy was the fact that time was passing with frightful rapidity, and that of the year required for mourning already nine months were gone.

As we have seen, Roger had not, strictly speaking, made Constance any promise; but it was evident that Constance was in no need of promises from Roger to regard their union as a settled thing. From the moment that Roger had gone to beg her to withdraw from the convent and she had agreed to return to the world, there had been a tacit understanding that she was to become Roger's wife. Besides, everybody thought so, — the viscount, the viscountess, the baron and the baroness, the neighbors, all, in short, that had known of the old love affair between Roger and Constance, and had heard the news of their recent engagement.

Then, let us add, Roger himself loved Constance more than he had ever loved her. Every other day he received a letter from the maiden, and every letter was a new leaf from the book of her heart, where Roger read the promise of ineffable joy. The situation was a

terrible one. Fear held Roger back. Love urged him on. His union with Constance presented two faces, the one happily smiling, the other deathly sad.

Twenty times Roger was on the point of setting out for Anguilhem to confess everything to his father and to Constance; but as Minerva restrained Achilles, so Roger's good genius restrained him.

At last, urged on by all, driven to his last entrenchment, and at his wits' end after another delay of six months, he pledged his word for the beginning of December, 1714. Then he affected to fall ill, hoping to die; and finally, he fixed positively upon the month of February, 1715.

Any excuses sufficed to Constance, who did not even question them. All delays she had accepted with saintly resignation. In the interval, also, she had lost her mother, and she too was wearing deep mourning.

It had been decided that the wedding should take place in Paris, and eight days before its celebration the baron and the baroness established themselves in the Hôtel d'Anguilhem, while the Vicomte de Beuzerie and his daughter stayed at a neighboring house, where Roger had provided for their entertainment.

At the Hôtel d'Anguilhem all had been changed: furniture, hangings, pictures, everything, even to the mirrors. Roger would have regarded it as profanation that Constance should make use of any article whatever that might have belonged to Sylvandire.

It will be remembered that Roger had sent his mother her share of the diamonds left by Monsieur de Bouzenois. These were the baroness' wedding present to her daughter-in-law.

Now, the approaching marriage of the Chevalier d'Anguilhem made a great stir in society. People

talked only of that and of the arrival of the Persian ambassador, Mehemet Riza Beg, who had, as we have said, arrived at the capital, as the bearer of gifts from his sovereign to Louis XIV. The ladies called on the ambassador in the afternoon, and the gentlemen in the morning.

One word about this singular personage, who, although introduced in our story a little later on, nevertheless requires especial mention.

Mehemet Riza Beg, as we have said, was the personage who, for the time being, divided popular attention with the Chevalier d'Anguilhem. However, with the modesty of which in the course of this most veracious history we have given so many proofs, we must admit that only a certain circle of Parisian society was interested in Roger, while Mehemet Riza Beg was the theme of all France.

In fact, since the year 807, when Abdallah was despatched on an embassy by Haroun, the ruler of Persia, to Charlemagne, the Emperor of the West, and who brought from his sovereign a live elephant, which was regarded as a great wonder, our succeeding sovereigns had never received any direct communication from the land of the "Arabian Nights" until about the middle of the year 1714, when the news was spread that Hussein, the Shah of Persia, grandson of the great Sephi, and son of the Sultan Soliman, having heard the virtues of the great King Louis XIV., extolled even in Ispahan, his capital, had resolved to despatch an ambassador to him with presents. This news, as yet unconfirmed, had seemed singularly to flatter the pride of the conqueror of Flanders; and as if Providence was willing to offer an indemnity to his vanity at the moment of reminding him of the nothingness of human

grandeur, the news came that Mehemet Riza Beg had disembarked at Marseilles.

Great news for Versailles was the ambassador's arrival! The old king, grievously tormented by his circle of bastards, stricken by the hand of God in the persons of his sons and grandsons, was becoming more sullen than ever, so much so, that Madame de Maintenon, although a woman of resources, complained to her confidantes of the terrible task she had undertaken of amusing a man the most difficult to amuse of all, not only in France and Navarre, but in the whole of Europe.

Mehemet Riza Beg was coming, then, it would appear, in the very nick of time to galvanize, as we nowadays say, the great sepulchre, as Versailles was called, and the great cadaver, as they called Louis XIV.

Also there were people who said under their breaths that Mehemet Riza Beg was not an ambassador of Hussein, the Shah of Persia, but of Madame de Maintenon, the anonymous queen of France.

However that might have been, and whencesoever he may have come, Mehemet Riza Beg had been received with great pomp. It was barely learned that he had landed at Marseilles, when the king sent Monsieur de Saint-Olon, his ambassador, to the King of Morocco, to receive him. In fact, the honors due to special envoys were rendered to Mehemet Riza Beg, who reached Charenton on the twenty-sixth of January, made his entry into the capital on the seventh of the following February, and was admitted to a formal audience on the nineteenth of the same month.

Now, as we have intimated, the ambassador was the lion of the day. Nothing was talked of but his grandeur, his peculiarities, and the anxiety to which his capricious whims subjected the Baron de Breteuil,

commissioned by the great king to entertain this envoy doubly-extraordinary sent him by his brother, the Shah of Persia.

It was therefore quite natural that, having seen Paris and Versailles, Monsieur de Beuzerie and his daughter should request to see the ambassador.

Roger, who was growing more cheerful with the approach of his new happiness, saw no reason for denying his fiancée a gratification so small.

Consequently, as the nuptial blessing was to be pronounced at noon, and as nothing is more tedious to a newly married couple than the wedding day, during which they are obliged to receive the congratulations of parents and friends, it was decided to make the proposed visit to the said ambassador between the ceremony and the dinner.

The twenty-sixth of February was the day appointed for the union of Constance and the chevalier. By hardily confronting that moment so solemn to all, and so terrible to him, Roger had ended, not by forgetting the position in which this second marriage was placing him, but by disregarding it.

In brief, he was like one who had offered his life as a sacrifice, who knew that at any moment it might be taken, but who, meanwhile, was resolved to enjoy to the utmost the days that were left.

Since morning Roger had surrendered to the intoxicating delight of beholding Constance again. In gazing upon her all else was forgotten.

On emerging from Saint Roch, where the marriage had been celebrated, her attendants escorted Constance to her apartments for the purpose of exchanging her bridal attire, and Roger and Cretté took their way to the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs, where Mehemet Riza Beg was

installed in state. Gentlemen, as we have said, were received in the morning, and ladies in the afternoon.

The Marquis de Cretté was acquainted with the Baron de Breteuil, and had secured letters from him.

Thanks to their letters, they were at once ushered into the presence of His Excellency. There was a throng of visitors, and they passed in groups of four in front of the ambassador, who, seated on a mat in the middle of his salon, gravely bowed as they passed. The names of the visitors were announced as they were successively admitted.

When the turn of the friends came, the Marquis de Cretté and the Chevalier d'Anguilhem were announced as the others had been.

Riza Beg was at that moment engaged in smoking, or rather, a slave, kneeling before him, was in the act of lighting his pipe.

Roger observed that the slave, whose back alone could be seen, had a comely figure.

On hearing the names of the Marquis de Cretté and the Chevalier d'Anguilhem, the ambassador started, and the slave turned.

Having already advanced four steps into the room, the two gentlemen stopped short and looked at each other, pale and motionless, as if the slave's face, like the head of Medusa, had turned them to stone; and then, after a moment of bewilderment, they took one another by the hand, saluted, and withdrew backward out of the salon, without having even glanced at the ambassador.

"O Roger!" exclaimed the marquis, on reaching the antechamber, "what a resemblance!"

"Cretté," replied d'Anguilhem, "it is no resemblance. It is Sylvandire herself, and I am lost!"

Then, in few words, he related his story to the marquis. However, he had left himself but little to tell. During the night of his delirium he had revealed nearly everything.

"In that case," cried Cretté, "you must flee at once. Quickly secure all your gold and diamonds, and start for Flanders, Holland, or England. Go to the ends of the earth, but go at once."

Roger did not move from the spot.

"But how does she happen to be with this beast of an ambassador?" said Cretté.

"Who can fathom God's designs?" gloomily returned Roger.

"Come, come!" cried the marquis, hurrying him along. "No theology. Don't lose a second. Send for post-horses, get a carriage, and be off!"

"Without Constance? Never! never!"

"But, my dear friend, do you know to what you are exposing yourself?"

"To death, I know; but what matters death, provided I do not die until to-morrow?"

"Permit me to say that your reasoning is perfectly absurd. To-morrow, my dear friend, you will, I hope, have still less desire to die than you have to-day. You must live, *morbleu!* and live a long time. So leave to-day, this very instant. Only tell me where you are going, and to-morrow or to-night I will send you your wife. I will take her, if necessary, to you wherever you are, and once together, you will forget the ambassador. You will forget Sylvandire; you will forget the universe."

"No, Cretté, no. Abandon me; you see, indeed, that I bring only misfortune!"

"Oh! if you lose your head, chevalier, that will

really be past endurance. Why, do you wish to be the laughing-stock of all France? Do you wish — *Diable!* bear in mind the gallows of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. Apropos, was that the reason — "

"Alas! yes, my friend."

"Poor fellow! But I urge you again to make up your mind, Roger. *Peste!* the king makes no joke of morals. Remember For-l'Évêque, the Bastile, Châlon-sur-Saône. Fifteen months' imprisonment for neglecting your wife. Then what would it be for selling her?"

Arguing thus, they arrived at the Hôtel d'Anguilhem. Constance had gone with the baroness and her young friends to pay her call at the ambassador's.

Cretté profited by the opportunity to urge Roger to action. Roger had nearly thirty thousand francs in his coffer, and diamonds to the value of two hundred thousand francs. It was more than enough for immediate needs. He had therefore almost decided to flee, when all the ladies returned. In consequence of one of Mehemet Riza Beg's caprices, the doors of the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs had been suddenly closed, and the reception postponed until five o'clock in the evening.

The sight of Constance produced its effect. Roger possessed neither the strength to fly, nor the courage to reveal the situation. Dinner was announced. Mechanically, Roger followed his guests and took his place at the table in such a state of preoccupation that it was observed by all.

But, on his wedding day the head of a newly-married man may be a prey to thoughts of such conflicting nature that none would be indiscreet enough to ask him of what he was thinking. Yet from time to time Constance

regarded him with misgiving, and at the least sound d'Anguilhem and Cretté would give a start and turn their eyes upon the door.

In this manner the dessert was reached. Roger and Cretté began to be somewhat reassured. Roger smiled upon his bride, and his smile was life to her. With the charming high-bred manner that so few people have preserved in these days, Cretté was telling some of the anecdotes that no one dares tell any more, when suddenly a hideous looking negro boy entered and asked for Monsieur le Baron d'Anguilhem.

Monsieur d'Anguilhem *père* had already risen, when Roger, comprehending that he was the one to whom the summons was addressed, made a sign to his father to be seated again, and, with blanched countenance, he himself followed the negro.

Without strength to ask his guide a single question, Roger descended the stairs. Besides, if any doubt had remained to him, the matter would have been promptly explained. In the centre of the court he saw a two-seated chaise, and in the chaise, on the farther side, sat the young slave that he had recognized in the morning, and whose recognition had given him such a terrible turn.

The slave made a sign for Roger to enter the chaise and take the opposite seat.

Roger obeyed without a word, and sat down before her. The husband and wife of other days confronted each other.

"At last, dear Roger," said Sylvandire, "after many difficulties, I see you again, thank God!"

Roger bowed.

"You did not count on me as a guest to-day, did you?" proceeded Sylvandire, deriving from Roger the

same pleasure that a cat has in playing with a mouse before eating it.

"No, I confess I did not," returned Roger.

"No. You thought me at Constantinople, at Cairo, or at Tripoli at the very least. But I loved you so much, my dear, that I could not endure absence from you, and I eagerly seized upon the first opportunity presenting itself to return to Europe."

"Excessively kind," muttered Roger.

"But how has my love been rewarded? I come, I inquire about you. I am told that you are about to take another wife, and that to-day, to-day even, you are married; but understand that I am jealous, — ingrate!"

Every one of her words froze poor Roger. Finally, after a moment's silence, during which Sylvandire not once took her eyes from his, Roger asked, —

"But what do you wish of me now?"

"I wish to know at what price you sold me, that I may add the sum to the other small claims that I have against you."

"*Ma foi*," said Roger, "all things considered, I was justified in selling a wife that had caused me to be imprisoned."

"I ought to have done worse than that, miscreant that you are," answered Sylvandire in purring tones.

"Had me killed, perhaps? Ah! indeed, madame, had you done that, you would, I admit, have rendered me a valuable service."

"Listen," said Sylvandire. "A truce to jesting, and let us talk business."

"With all my heart," replied Roger. "But I swear that for my part I am neither jesting nor in the least disposed to jest. Therefore speak as seriously as you will, I listen."

"Roger," resumed Sylvandire, "without a suspicion of it, you have created my happiness. I became acquainted with Mehemet Riza Beg; I pleased him, and he has made me his wife."

"What!" exclaimed Roger with a ray of hope, "and you too are married?"

'Yes, but in the Mohammedan way, which does very well for that country, but which would certainly be worth nothing here. So that I have really only one husband, while you have two wives. Now, you know, my dear husband, polygamy is —"

"Yes, yes, I know," said Roger.

"You are, therefore, nicely caught, completely in my power, for I waited until the thing was done, you understand; and in any case, even though you had not politely come and made me a call this morning, you would have had mine this evening."

"Why, would you ruin me?" cried Roger.

"Fool! What would I gain by ruining you? No, no, dear Roger. In the first place, I wish you to give me the hundred thousand crowns that you have inherited from my poor father."

"Oh! as to that," cried Roger, "it is no more than just, and I have kept the sum in bonds payable to bearer, all ready to be sent to you."

And Roger moved as if to descend from the carriage and go for his portfolio.

But Sylvandire checked him.

"Not so fast, now, not so fast," said Sylvandire. "Oh! that is not all. You are not to be let off so cheaply."

"I am waiting," said Roger.

"Next, the one hundred thousand crowns of my *dot*."

"What! your *dot?* You know very well that I never received any one hundred thousand crowns."

"I know that sum is specified in my marriage contract, and that I must not wrong my second husband, whose behavior, you will acknowledge, has been very different from yours, since he bought me, and you — you sold me."

"Very well,"said Roger, "as you will, the one hundred thousand crowns shall be yours."

"Next," began Sylvandire.

"What!" cried Roger, "is there anything more?"

"Certainly, there is the price of my person. *Diable!* my dear Roger, if not of age, I was at least emancipated, and I owned an interest in myself. I am not a lawyer's daughter for nothing."

"As to that," said Roger, "I can give you my word of honor that I did not receive a sou, and I even — I even — well, I gave five hundred pistoles to boot."

"Oh! it is ungallant of you to tell me that, monsieur," coquettishly protested Sylvandire. "But as you are a man of honor, and as you give me your word, I believe you. So, if you like, it shall be six hundred thousand livres."

"When do you wish the money?" asked Roger.

"I had a great mind, however," continued Sylvandire, without replying to the question, "I had a great mind to appear in the salon in place of staying in the court, and be suddenly announced by the faithful Breton. You still have Breton?"

Roger bowed affirmatively.

"And have the faithful Breton suddenly announce Madame d'Anguilhem, just to see your look of consternation at finding yourself between your two wives, Turk that you are! But I preferred other satisfaction.

As I said, give me six hundred thousand livres, and then we shall see."

"Where do you wish me to send this sum?" asked Roger.

"To the embassy," replied Sylvandire. "Ask for the favorite slave of His Excellency, Mehemet Riza Beg. I shall know what that means, and will respond to the call."

"And when must you have the six hundred thousand livres?" demanded Roger, repeating the question that had remained unanswered.

"In two hours."

"In two hours!" exclaimed Roger. "Why, you might as well ask me at once to blow out my brains. How do you expect me to get one hundred thousand crowns together in two hours?"

"Why, you have diamonds, sell them. You have friends, draw on their purses. I am sorry to seem so unreasonable, but we are leaving very shortly, my dear Roger. His Excellency, Mehemet Riza Beg, has remained solely at my request that he would wait until your marriage was solemnized."

"In two hours! in two hours!" cried Roger. "Why it is impossible. Wait at least until to-morrow morning."

"I will not wait a moment."

"Then do your worst."

"My worst, oh! *mon Dieu*, that is simple enough. I will enter the hôtel, go to your room, get into bed, and wait till you come. Angola," pursued Sylvandire, addressing the negro, and making a movement as if to get out, "open the door, I wish to descend."

The negro grasped the door-knob. Roger detained Sylvandire.

"But think of the consequences."

"There are no consequences, save only for you. Mehemet has no claim on me but that of having bought me. Now, I suspect that such a sale is decidedly illegal in France. Besides, it was you that sold me. It would come with a bad grace for you to reproach me with what happened while I was in the hands of my owner."

"But, madame —"

"Listen," said Sylvandire. "I have said that I would give you two hours, and, as I am as good as my word, I still grant them; but if, in two hours — heed me well —"

"Oh! I am not losing a word," returned Roger with a sigh.

"If in two hours the six hundred thousand livres have not reached the hôtel of the embassy —"

"Well?" demanded Roger, anxiously.

"Well, dear Roger," replied Sylvandire, "expect to hear Madame Roger d'Anguilhem announced, and to see me appear."

So saying, Sylvandire dismissed her husband with a captivating little nod and an adorable smile. Then, at a sign from his mistress, the negro opened the carriage door, and Roger alighted.

The carriage immediately began to move away; but as far as the grand entrance, Sylvandire, her head entirely out of the window, continued waving her hand to Roger.

XXX.

HOW THE MARQUIS DE CRETTÉ NEGOTIATED MATTERS IN THE NAME OF THE CHEVALIER D'ANGUILHEM, AND BROUGHT THIS ENTIRE STORY TO A MOST UNEXPECTED ISSUE.

Roger found Cretté waiting for him at the foot of the staircase.

"Well?" interrogated the marquis.

"Well, my friend, it was she!"

"I suspected as much. What does she want? What does she demand?"

"An impossibility."

"But what?"

"Six hundred thousand livres in two hours."

"Six hundred thousand livres in two hours!" repeated Cretté, "excellent!"

"Excellent! what do you mean? Why I have only three hundred thousand livres in hand, and, in two hours from now, if I have not found three hundred thousand more, which is impossible —"

"Well, if you have not the other three hundred thousand, what then?"

"She will come to the hôtel and have herself publicly announced as Madame Roger d'Anguilhem."

"She will not do it."

"Why?"

"I don't know why; but if she could do it she would have done it."

"Ah! my friend."

"Listen, Roger: when people demand money and fail to take their rights, they are in hiding; there is something back of it all."

"But, my friend, she is not in hiding, since she tells me that in two hours she will announce herself in my house as my wife."

"Yes, I know, it is alarming."

"My dear fellow, I shall go to my room and blow my brains out."

"There is time enough for that yet; leave things to me."

"But what can you do?"

"I do not know, but I shall try to save you."

"Oh! my dear Cretté, my only friend!" cried Roger, casting his arms around the marquis' neck.

"Yes, yes, I understand all that," returned Cretté; "but we must not waste our time weeping in each other's arms."

"What must I do? I place myself in your hands; command and I will obey."

"Detain your guests in the salon; it is only half-past eight, that will be an easy matter, therefore. Look as cheerful as you can, — I will not be too exacting, poor fellow. Prevent any one's entering the salon without Breton's knowledge."

"I will station him at the door."

"Now, give me the three hundred thousand livres that are payable to bearer, all your jewels, and the cash that you have. I will go to my notary and drain his purse. The devil is in it if we do not get the requisite sum."

"Yes, yes, Cretté, get me the money, sell everything, save me."

And Roger ascended the stairs with his friend, got the

three hundred thousand livres, went with him to Constance's chamber and took all the diamonds that he had given to his wife. Then, Cretté, leaping into the carriage which had been ordered in the meantime, dashed away with his horses at full speed.

Roger went back to the salon, and as Cretté had directed, he put on as good a face as he was able.

Meanwhile, Cretté hastened home and secured twenty-five thousand livres; he proceeded thence to his notary, who gave him fifty thousand. These sums, with the thirty thousand livres in cash that Roger had given him, and the diamonds rated at their inventory value, almost made up the six hundred thousand livres demanded.

All this chasing about had consumed an hour and a half. Hence there was no time to lose.

On leaving his notary, Cretté gave orders to proceed to the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs.

Five minutes later, he alighted at the door.

He ascended the stairs. Thanks to the change made in the hour of their reception, the ladies were descending.

He encountered Mademoiselle Poussette, who had just made her call, and, who, with peals of laughter, was returning to her carriage.

Cretté, fearing that she would cause him to lose valuable time, endeavored to avoid her, but it was not to be done. Mademoiselle Poussette had seen him; overcome with laughter she permitted herself to sink into his arms.

"Well! let us hear what has happened," demanded Cretté. "Why are you laughing so, mademoiselle?"

"Ah! my dear marquis," cried Mademoiselle Poussette, "the queerest adventure, the most unheard-of, most unexpected, most mythological, most fabulous!"

"*Mon Dieu!*" thought Cretté, "can she by any chance have recognized Sylvandire?"

"An adventure such as one meets with in stories, in fairy-tales, in the 'Arabian Nights,' an adventure that you will not believe."

"Certainly, certainly!" cried Cretté, "of course I shall believe you; but talk fast, my love, as I am pressed for time."

"You are going up to the ambassador?"

"Yes."

"Then look at him well and squarely in the face, as I am looking at you this moment; in imagination, divest him of his beard, of his mustache, and then come to see me to-morrow morning, that is all I have to say; or this very evening, if you prefer it, monsieur le marquis," added she, with a little squeeze of the hand and a most gracious smile.

"What!" exclaimed Cretté, "I am to look the ambassador well and squarely in the face, divest him of beard and mustache? Poussette, my dear friend, do you happen to know the ambassador?"

"Do I know him! — as well as I know you, as well as I know d'Herbigny, as well as I know Chastellux, as well as I should probably have known your friend Roger, had he not always proved cruel."

"Poussette, my dear child," cried the marquis, "you can save my life."

"Your life, marquis?"

"No, not exactly mine, but my best friend's which is absolutely the same thing — Roger's."

"What must I do?"

"Who is this ambassador? His name, Poussette, his name! Twenty thousand livres and the good graces of the handsomest gentleman in Paris. I pledge my word for him; if he fails to pay, I will pay. Poussette, my dear girl, what is the ambassador's name?"

"Ah! for shame! you think me selfish, marquis, you deserve indeed —"

"His name, Poussette! and by midnight I will bring you the twenty thousand livres; expect me."

"Well, marquis, it is — you will never believe it."

"Go on. I invariably believe what women tell me."

"It is —"

"Poussette, you torture me!"

"Well, it is the Indian."

"What Indian?"

"Why, the Indian, you know, my yellow lover."

"Roger's opponent? that man of the lawsuit? Afghano?" cried the marquis.

"Himself."

"Ah! Poussette of my heart, come to my arms!"

And, heedless of being seen by the people that continued to descend from the ambassador's, Cretté folded the demoiselle to his heart.

"But are you quite positive?" continued he, unable to credit such good news.

"I tell you that I recognized him in spite of the beard that he has grown, in spite of his blackened teeth, in spite of his pink-tinted nails, and yet the monster made believe not to see me! Ah! marquis, marquis, how ungrateful men are!"

"My dear Poussette," said Cretté, "I will be proof to the contrary. I shall be with you at midnight; expect me to supper."

"And if Chastellux comes?"

"You will say that you have a headache."

"How you arrange things, monsieur le marquis!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Poussette, endeavoring to blush.

"Not so well as you, I know, my Venus; besides, I rely entirely on your sagacity. Adieu, Poussette, and if

you have told the truth, well, you have rendered me a service that I will never in my life forget."

Mademoiselle Poussette regained her carriage, and Cretté mounted the stairs four steps at a time. At the ambassador's door he was stopped by the negro.

"What do you want?" said he. "His Excellency's reception for gentlemen is over."

"I am not seeking His Excellency," returned Cretté, "but his favorite slave."

"Then you come —"

"On behalf of the Chevalier d'Anguilhem."

"In that case, enter."

And the negro ushered Cretté into a room furnished in the style of the Orient; then, saying that he would acquaint the person whom the marquis sought he left him.

And five minutes later Sylvandire entered.

"Ah! it is you, monsieur le marquis," said Sylvandire. "I had a presentiment that I was about to have the pleasure of meeting you again. My presentiment was not at fault. Have you the six hundred thousand livres?"

"No," boldly answered the marquis.

"Then why are you here?"

"To speak with your master, His Excellency Mehemet Riza Beg."

"From whom, seigneur?" asked Sylvandire, lightly..

"From Monsieur Voyer d'Argenson, lieutenant of the police of the realm."

Sylvandire paled; Cretté noted the effect of his words.

"His Excellency cannot receive at present; he is in bed."

"Well," said Cretté, "I will go and find some one that will make him get up."

"Stay," said Sylvandire. "I will see if His Excellency is visible."

"Pardon, fair lady," said Cretté, "but I have reasons of my own for wishing to accompany you, otherwise — "

He made a step toward the door.

"Come with me," said Sylvandire.

And she opened a door that led into a corridor.

The marquis followed, and with her penetrated to the salon of the ambassador, who, seated on his mat, assumed an air of lordly consequence that was ridiculous in the extreme.

"Wait," said Sylvandire, "I will summon the interpreter."

"It is quite unnecessary," remarked Cretté.

"What! do you, then, know Persian, marquis?"

"No; but His Excellency will be so kind as to speak French."

"He has no knowledge of our language."

"Do you think so?" said Cretté.

Then, approaching the ambassador and tapping him on the shoulder, he said, —

"Am I not right, my dear Monsieur Afghano, in supposing that, in my case, you will have the extreme goodness to remember that you speak French?"

The ambassador uncrossed his legs, threw back one hand as a support, and, with blanched face, stared at Cretté.

"Oho!" said Cretté. "My dear monsieur, had I thought the face of an old acquaintance could produce this effect, I would have instructed madame to prepare you."

"What do you wish, monsieur?" said the Indian.

"There, you see," said Cretté to Sylvandire. "I told you that His Excellency would make an exception in my

favor! I wish, dear Monsieur Afghano," resumed Cretté, again turning to the false ambassador, "to notify you that within one hour a warning will have been sent to the king whom you have mystified, that he has been made your dupe."

The Indian became livid, and his hand stole toward his poniard.

"There? there!" said Cretté, "no tragedy, I beg, dear Monsieur Afghano, it would be useless; for I warn you that I am seconded by one who knows your whole history, and who will in one hour start for Versailles, if in that time I do not return to the hôtel. However, my dear friend, don't let that hinder you; kill me if you like. I have never been able to distinguish myself, and by such a death I should be almost immortalized. The Marquis de Cretté killed by His Excellency, Mehemet Riza Beg, Ambassador Extraordinary of His Most Sublime Majesty, the Shah of Persia. *Diable!* I should be in great luck. But no: you lay your weapons aside; you return to more pacific ideas. Well, so be it, I am myself a good-natured fellow; whatever suits you suits me. Let us talk business."

The ambassador arose and went himself to bolt the door.

"Yes, I understand," continued Cretté. "You purchased madame, and you have a good bargain, for madame is charming. You then formed each other's acquaintance, which is quite natural; on acquaintance you discovered that you each had a grievance against the same man,—against poor Roger. You then said: 'Very well, since we have a hatred in common, let us have our revenge in common.' Meanwhile, the report reached you that no one could any longer amuse the king, and, being a man of inventive turn, you improvised this embassy. Bravo!

my dear fellow, bravo! There was everything to gain; you pocketed the presents that His Very Christian Majesty had the kindness to grant you in exchange for the baubles that you brought him from your sovereign, for whom, by the way, you have secured the reputation of a niggard. As for my lady, her thoughts ran something like this: 'I shall make him surrender my father's inheritance' — which is just — 'and my *dot*,' — which is much less just, since madame never had a *dot*. With these ends in view, you come to Paris, and fortune favors you beyond expectation. You learn that Monsieur d'Anguilhem is about to marry, and you wait until the marriage has taken place. Then when the deed is done, when there is no retreat, you immediately begin to work the gold mine that has just been opened up before you. And so, you at first extract six hundred thousand livres through dread of the rope that hangs from the neck of a bigamist. But this is not all: after this demand comes another, and this other is followed by still another. During your entire life, you haunt the shadow of this blessed gibbet, fleecing the chevalier until the inheritance from Monsieur Bouzenois gradually reverts to the hands of Monsieur Afghano. I think I have stated the case accurately, have I not, Monsieur Afghano? have I not, madame?" continued Cretté, alternately casting upon each a glance that was half of amusement, half menace. "*Diable!* we are French, and, consequently, born wicked, says Monsieur Boileau-Despreaux, whom madame must have read in her youth."

Sylvandire and Afghano were crushed, and they cowered before Cretté like two criminals before their judge.

"Ah! and now," continued Cretté, "as the position of each is clear, the chevalier can be hanged for bigamy, Monsieur Afghano can be quartered for forgery, Madame

Sylvandire can be sent to Saint Lazare as an adventuress. Let us come to the point.

"You have received a million, or thereabout, from the King of France, my dear Monsieur Afghano. In this portfolio are three hundred thousand livres, your father's bequest, my dear Dame d'Anguilhem. You, Monsieur l'Indien, have nearly two million of your own; altogether that makes, according to my reckoning, three million three hundred thousand livres: a very pretty penny with which to retire to Tripoli, to Constantinople, to Cairo, to Ispahan, to Pekin, to any place you wish, in short, and to lead the life of a sultan everywhere."

"Monsieur le marquis," said Afghano, "I swear I will start to-morrow."

"Not so fast, not so fast! I intend that you shall start; but on two slight conditions that I am about to name."

"Speak, monsieur, I listen."

"Monsieur, do you swear never again to return to Paris?"

"I swear it."

"I believe you, for your oath is vouched for by your fear of discovery. I will ask no other security than your word, and I am quite sure that I shall never see you again."

The Indian inclined his head.

"But that is not the case with madame. Let her once be separated from you, let you once go away, as soon as I can no longer prove you an impostor and madame your accomplice, madame might any day be seized with a desire to return and seat herself at the conjugal fireside, which would embarrass us greatly, since at this fireside there is room only for two. Therefore I shall not leave myself at the mercy of madame's word. Madame shall

give me a little letter, which I will dictate myself, and, when I have that letter in my hands, why, madame may follow you to the ends of the earth."

Sylvandire rebelled.

"You must," said Cretté. "It is hard, I admit, to have come to lay down the law and to have it dealt out instead; this is a condition *sine quâ non*."

"And if I refuse?"

"On leaving here, I shall go to the chief of police. I shall expose your little fraud, and in half an hour you will be in the Bastile."

"But," said Sylvandire, "we are not friendless, monsieur le marquis; we did not come here without having taken precautions. We have powerful allies."

"As Monsieur de Royancourt cannot be in question, since I have had the honor to run my sword through his body, I presume that you have reference to the Jesuits."

"Possibly."

"Alas, my dear Madame d'Anguilhem, although you have had some slight association with those gentlemen, you do not yet know them. You would compromise them outrageously by making use of their name. They are not simpletons, they would sacrifice you."

"It is true, it is only too true!" murmured Afghano.

"In that case," said Sylvandire, "what must I do?"

"What monsieur le marquis exacts, my dear," replied the Indian; "believe me, it is our wisest plan."

"But, if I give you this letter, will you swear that you will let us and our money leave France unmolested?"

"I give you my word of honor on it, I, Alphonse, Marquis de Cretté."

"I am ready, monsieur," said Sylvandire, seating herself at a table on which there were paper, ink, and pens. "Dictate; I will write."

Cretté dictated: —

"TUNIS, Oct. 11, 1713.

"MONSIEUR D'ANGUILHEM, — Cease grieving for my death, for I am told that your whole life is wrecked. I live. Although I fell into the sea, although I seemed to be drowned, it was a subterfuge to rid myself of the dominion of a husband whom, despite all his attentions, I could not bring myself to love, and in order, at last, to reach the arms of the man whom I adore. To-day, monsieur, under other laws, human and divine, I have become his wife, and you will never see me again. Dead to all, I wish to be especially so to you. Therefore, from this day, consider yourself wholly widowed and also perfectly free.

"And now, that you may be as happy as I am, is the last wish for us both of her who once was

"SYLVANDIRE, DAME D'ANGUILHEM.

"P. S. This letter will be conveyed to you by a trustworthy man whom my husband is despatching to France."

"How can this letter serve you?" inquired Sylvandire, as she handed it to the marquis, after having addressed and sealed it.

"That, madame, you will learn, should you, failing to keep your word, ever force us to make use of it."

And, bowing to Afghano and to Sylvandire, he proceeded to the door, which he opened, and at its threshold said to the ambassador, loud enough to be heard by his people, —

"Deign, Your Excellency, to accept my sincere compliments."

Afghano, wholly prostrated by the scene that had just taken place, remained where he was. But Sylvandire followed Cretté.

"Marquis," she said, in a low voice as she crossed the antechamber with him, "tell me frankly, is his wife pretty?"

"Not so pretty as you, madame," replied Cretté, "but she loves him more."

"What would you have?" retorted Sylvandire. "I wished to be a princess."

"Another marriage like this one, madame," said Cretté, "and you will attain your end; you are already an ambassadress."

Sylvandire gave a sigh, and slowly regained the depths of the hôtel.

CONCLUSION.

CRETTÉ sprang into his carriage, the horses set off at a run, and he returned to the Hôtel d'Anguilhem.

He found Constance, alone and desolate, in a little salon, weeping to find her husband so gloomy and preoccupied.

"He believed himself in honor bound to keep his word," thought she; "but most assuredly he no longer loves me."

When Cretté opened the door she thought her husband was coming to seek her, and she quickly sprang forward to meet him; but, on seeing the marquis, she dropped back into her chair.

Cretté understood what was passing in the mind of the poor young wife; he went up to her reassuringly.

"Come, come," said he, "dry your beautiful eyes, dear lady, and let us return together to the salon. In fifteen minutes Roger will be himself again, and I can answer for your future."

Then he took her by the hand and led her toward the grand salon.

Breton was on guard at the door, in obedience to his orders.

The marquis beckoned to him; Breton came.

"My good fellow," said Cretté, "throw open both leaves of the door, and in your most pompous tones announce Madame Roger d'Anguilhem."

Having no reason for preventing the entrance of his master's wife and his friend, Breton obeyed on the

instant, and, inflating his lungs, he swung back the doors and made the arches echo with the name so dreaded by the chevalier, —

"Madame Roger d'Anguilhem!"

At this announcement, Roger, who, in the farthest corner of the room, was endeavoring to converse with d'Herbigny and Monsieur de Beuzerie, felt his legs give way beneath him, and sinking into an arm-chair, he covered his face with his hands.

Then, with a radiant smile on her lips, Constance entered, leaning on Cretté's arm.

They advanced toward Roger, who, hearing the sound of their steps, and not daring to look up, wished himself a hundred feet under ground.

"Well, my friend," said Cretté, as he clapped his hand on the other's shoulder, and thereby made Roger shiver to the very marrow of his bones, "what is the matter? Here is Constance."

"Ah! Cretté! ah! Constance," cried he, "I thought — I beg pardon!"

"You thought what? Ah! Madame d'Anguilhem has come to look for you, and you are afraid," said the marquis, taking his hand and slipping Sylvandire's letter into it at the same time. "It is eleven o'clock, chevalier, take away your wife."

"Yes! yes!" cried Roger, "to the end of the world, if needs be."

"No, not so far," replied Cretté, "that is useless now."

Then, while the young couple were crossing the salon on the way to their apartment, he called out, —

"Have you heard the news? The Persian ambassador leaves to-morrow with all his suite. I propose, messieurs and mesdames, that we see them off, — they embark at Chailiot."

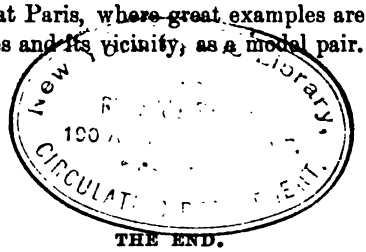
"We will not go, will we?" said Constance, as she opened the door of their room.

"No, indeed!" answered Roger, as he closed it.

The next day Cretté informed his friend of his two promises to Mademoiselle Poussette, the first of which, the payment of twenty thousand livres, the marquis had scrupulously kept the night before.

As the chevalier was a man of honor, and incapable of belying his friend's word, we have no doubt but that in due place and season the second promise was kept with the same fidelity.

It is needless to add that Roger and Constance are still quoted, not at Paris, where great examples are soon lost, but at Loches and its vicinity, as a model pair.



THE END.

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